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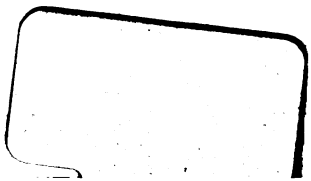

THE

Lady's Closet Library.

THE MARYS;

OR,

THE BEAUTY OF FEMALE HOLINESS.

BY ROBERT PHILIP,

OF MABERLY CHAPEL.

"Holy women of old."—*St. Peter.*

"There stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary of Magdala."—*St. John.*

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1836.

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(1564)

TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE PRINCESS VICTORIA,

These Essays

ON FEMALE CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE,

ARE,

BY HER GRACIOUS PERMISSION,

DEDICATED,

WITH

FERVENT PRAYER THAT HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

MAY EXEMPLIFY

ALL

"THE BEAUTIES OF HOLINESS,"

IN THE COURT AND TO HER COUNTRY,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THIS "CLOSET MANUAL" has a twofold peculiarity. It is addressed exclusively to Females; because the author believes that *general* appeals on the subject of Sin and Holiness are not well adapted to the conscience of the sex, nor so faithful as they seem. Its style, too, is occasionally peculiar; because, he thinks that PARABLE and ALLEGORY are legitimate weapons in "the defence of the Gospel." He has, therefore, attempted to give Oriental forms to old truths, whenever he found it difficult to say, in ordinary language, all that he wished to suggest to the female mind. He has also given that prominence to "the *beauty* of holiness," which it has in Scripture, in common with the nature and necessity of holiness. This plan and purpose will be adhered to in the succeeding volumes of THE LADY'S CLOSET LIBRARY.

The Author's appeal is to the Mothers and Daughters in British "Israel:" they must be both his patrons and judges, if this well-meant experiment succeed.

NEWINGTON GREEN, May 24, 1835.

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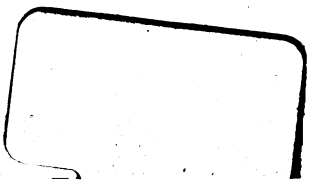

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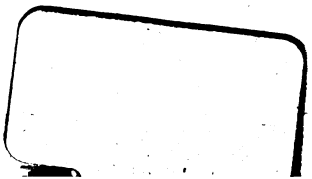

"the beauty" of their "holiness." Psalm cx. The reason for this difference in the revelation of the same fact is obvious; the day of Christ had just been shown to David as a "day of power," which should make people "willing" to follow Christ, and as a period of gracious and unchangeable priesthood, which should encourage them to follow holiness; whereas neither of these facts was fully disclosed to Abraham, when he saw the day of Christ afar off. What was shown to him was, chiefly, the *certainty* of that day, and not the glory of it: and therefore its results were given in numbers, not in characteristics.

This illustration will apply to the prophecies at large. Just in proportion as they unveil the glory and grace of the Saviour to the Church, they exhibit or enforce the necessity and beauty of holiness. The clearer lights they shed upon the mediatorial way of acceptance with God, the stronger lights they pour upon the "narrow way which leadeth to everlasting life."

This is an interesting fact. It leads us to

look back among the first disciples of Christ, who followed him in this "regeneration of life," to notice how far they justified the prophecies, which thus "went before," concerning the beauty of their holiness. Did his first offspring, "the dew of his youth," resemble the dew of the morning in character and spirit? Was he at all glorified in his saints then, as well as "admired by them?" Now, so far as moral character is one of the essential beauties of holiness, his first disciples were, in general, eminently holy. Whatever they may have been before they left all and followed Christ, afterwards they were emphatically virtuous and upright. For a long time, indeed, their views of the person, work, and kingdom of Christ were very worldly, and even their spirit was ambitious as well as rash; but their general habits were both circumspect and devotional: even their enemies "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus" to some good purpose, so far as exemplary conduct was the effect of their intercourse with him.

Did you ever observe, whilst reviewing the character of the Saviour's early friends, that his *female* followers soon acquired great beauty of holiness under the influence of his word and example? There is, indeed, a complete halo of loveliness around the character and spirit of John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved;" and there is much sublimity about Peter, notwithstanding all his faults; and the whole eleven, compared with even the best of the Jews of that time, were emphatically "holy men:" but, still, "whatsoever things are pure, and whatsoever things are lovely," abound most among the *women* of Judea and Galilee, who followed him. There is an exquisite and touching beauty about the holiness of the Marys of Bethlehem and Bethany especially, which eclipses even the excellence of the "holy women of old." We almost forget Abraham's Sarah in the presence of Joseph's Mary, and lose sight of Jacob's Rachel whilst Mary of Bethany is before us. Of them we must say, and even the world will respond the exclamation, "Many

daughters have done virtuously," but ye have "excelled them all." Give them of "the fruit" of their own hands, and their "works will praise them in the gates."

It was not without special design, that the Holy Spirit transmitted to posterity so much of the history and character of these distinguished women: he evidently intended them to be *models* of female holiness to their sex. Hence he inspired both Elizabeth and the angel Gabriel to "HAIL" Mary of Bethlehem as "highly favoured and blessed among women," and taught the evangelists to depict her peculiar excellences: and not less care did he take to embody the character and embalm the memory of Mary of Bethany. No angel, indeed, pronounced her eulogy, but, what was far better, "Jesus loved Mary," and predicted that her love to him should be "told as a memorial of her" wheresoever the "Gospel should be preached throughout the whole world."

These are not accidents, nor mere incidents in the sacred history: Mary of Bethlehem, like

the star of Bethlehem, is evidently placed in the firmament of the Church, as a leading star, to guide wise women, as well as wise men, to Christ, and to teach both how to ponder his sayings, and revere his authority, and cleave to his cross. In like manner, Mary of Bethany, like her own "alabaster box of precious ointment," is so fully disclosed in all her principles, and so fully poured out in all her spirit before us by the sacred writers, that there can be no doubt but her lovely character was intended to be "as ointment poured forth," inspiring, as well as pleasing. Like the "good part, which shall never be taken from her," the beauty of her holiness can never be uninfluential on either sex, whilst it is the duty of both "to sit at the feet of Jesus," hearing his word; and that will be equally duty and delight in heaven, as well as on earth,

> "While breath or being last,
> Or immortality endures."

For who, that knows any thing of vital and ex-

perimental religion, has not said, in effect, both when remembering past attainments, and when anticipating future progress and enjoyment,

> "O that I might for ever sit,
> Like Mary, at the Master's feet?"

Thus the eye of a Christian, of either sex, and of whatever sphere in life or godliness, reposes upon Mary of Bethany, whenever it searches for an example of child-like docility, or of angel-like meekness, in learning of Christ. The spirit of a Christian takes *her* position at the feet of Christ, and tries to hang upon his lips with *her* zeal and zest, whenever it is hungering and thirsting after righteousness. The soul feels instinctively that this is the only way to "be filled" or refreshed by his presence. Accordingly, we have never found much enjoyment or profit, except when we have really sat at "the feet" of Christ, hearing his word for ourselves. Neither in the sanctuary, nor in the closet, have we become holier or happier, when we did not try to place ourselves in the position and spirit of Mary.

It will be seen at once, from this application of the example of Mary, that I regard both her place at the feet of Jesus, and her conduct in anointing his feet with "spikenard," as only illustrations of her habitual spirit and general character. Nothing is farther from my intention, because nothing could be more foreign to her real character, than to represent her as merely a meek, contemplative, and retiring Christian. She was, indeed, all this, but she was much more: she was as prompt as Martha in going out of the house to meet Jesus when he sent for her, and in serving him in the house when service was really wanted. It was not wanted when Martha said so. If she had stood in real need of assistance from Mary, the Saviour would not have continued, nor even begun to preach, in the house of Lazarus then: much less would he have commended Mary for sitting still, if she had been neglecting domestic duties. The character of Mary should, therefore, be judged, not by this instance of contrast with Martha's, but by the conduct

of Jesus. Now, HE certainly would not have thrown his immortal shield so promptly and fully over it, if sloth or selfishness, the love of ease, or the dislike of household duties, had been part of her character. From all we know of the Saviour, we may be quite sure that he would have reproved her himself, had she been either idle or negligent.

They are but very superficial observers, who seize upon the contrast of the moment between these sisters, to make out, that Mary was chiefly an amiable *Nun-like* being, who was fonder of contemplative piety than of practical duty. This is a very common opinion; but it is utterly at variance with fact, however appearances may seem to justify it. Even appearances are against it; for nothing is so prominent upon the surface of the case, as the Saviour's approbation of Mary's character. They are, therefore, at *issue* with both His judgment and testimony, who insinuate the charge or suspicion of *undomestic* habits against this holy woman. There is nothing to warrant

such an imputation. She sat at the feet of Jesus upon this occasion, because Jesus thought proper to open his lips as a minister, when he visited her house as a guest. Besides, His visits to Bethany were the real *sabbaths* of the family. Only then, had they the opportunity of hearing the glorious Gospel in all the fulness of its blessing: and as the opportunity did not occur often, it could not be too fully improved whilst it lasted. Thus, there is no more reason to think Mary inactive or undomestic, because she sat whilst Martha served with unnecessary bustle, than to suspect that those women, who sanctify the Sabbath most in the house of God, are least attentive to the affairs of their own houses. There is, perhaps, no better test of good domestic management all the week at home, than regularity and punctuality of attendance on public worship on the Sabbath. Those who are soonest and oftenest at the feet of Jesus on his own day, are certainly not idle or irregular on other days. It is because they are active, and act on *system*

through the week, that they can make so much of their Sabbaths.

I thus bring out the real character of Mary, that the beauty of holiness may not be supposed to consist in either mere *morals* or *musing*. There may be much morality, where there is no holiness; and there may be much holiness, where there are no literary tastes or habits. Neither fondness for public hearing, nor the

"Love of lonely musing,"

is any real proof, by itself, of a new heart, or of a right spirit, before God. Great readers (as they are called) are not often the deepest nor the most serious thinkers, even when their reading is of the best kind; and the contemplative recluse, who lives only to think, or who reckons every thing but mental pleasure insipid, is actually indulging "the lusts of the mind," instead of growing in grace or holiness. It may sound well, to say of a sweet enthusiast, whose element is solitude, and whose luxury is emotion, "that she is a being who

belongs to *another* world; her tastes are all so unearthly, and her sympathies so exalted:" but this is no compliment! Indeed, it is a heavy reflection upon both her heart and conscience. A heart that felt aright, or a conscience purified by the blood of atonement, would try to *do* good by action, as well as to *get* good by contemplation. No one belongs less to another world (if, by that, heaven is meant) than the being who has neither heart nor hand to be a blessing in this world. Her tastes may be unearthly; but heavenly, they certainly are not. They are not *angel-like:* for, are not all the angels "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation?" They are not *saint-like:* for all the spirits of the just in heaven take a lively interest in the progress of the kingdom of Christ on earth. And they are any thing but *god-like:* for Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, live and move, as if they had both their bliss and being in the welfare of this world.

How ever did it come to be supposed, in

the land of BIBLES, that there was either intellectual greatness, or moral loveliness, around any pensive or sweet recluse, who lives only in and for the ideal world of her own thoughts; whilst the Heathen and Mohammedan world is perishing for lack of knowledge, and the actual world at her door, sinning and suffering unpitied by her?

Those who have no taste for retirement or reading will, but too readily, join in this protest against sentimental seclusion. Those only who have but little time for direct mental improvement, will make a right use of the protest, or even repeat it in a good spirit. They will be glad to hear it. Not, however, because it condemns others, but because it relieves themselves from self-condemnation, by proving to them, from both the letter and spirit of Scripture, that *musing piety* is not the only nor the best piety. Many who have no inclination to cumber themselves needlessly with many things, like Martha, are yet encumbered with so many things which distract their attention,

and absorb their time, that they hastily conclude, or strongly suspect, that they have no real piety, because they are so unlike the Mary of their own imagination, and of popular opinion. They thus set themselves down as Marthas, (her real character, too, is equally mistaken,) who have not "chosen the good part," nor acquired the "one thing needful." But this is as unnecessary as it is unwise. Wherever real duty fills the hands, or inevitable care the heart, then there is as much holiness, and as much of the real beauty of it too, in doing or suffering the will of God well, as in acts of prolonged devotion, or in efforts of heavenly-mindedness.

This subject is much misunderstood. Indeed, many are afraid to speak out, or even to think freely, on the subject. They are quite dissatisfied with themselves, because they can command so little time for devotional reading and meditation; and yet they do not see how they can command more at present. They see clearly, and feel deeply, that their minds want improvement; that the great salvation

deserves more thought than they give to it; that they have not that communion with God which is so desirable, nor that witness of the Spirit which they deem so important; and hence they stand in doubt whether they have any real piety at all.

Now there is some danger, as well as difficulty, in meeting this case; because more want to get rid of such doubts, than those who are so placed and pledged in life, that they have but little spare time. The slothful and the worldly-minded are upon the watch, to lay hold of any thing that would lessen their self-condemnation, or tend to reconcile their habits with their hopes. The allowances to be made for the *real* want of time, they stand ready to snatch at, as excuses for not redeeming time, or for not improving it. The forbearance, and leniency, and sympathy of God towards his poor and afflicted children, are greedily seized and appropriated by slothful servants, and by heedless and heartless professors. For they, too, want to be happy in their own mind, how-

ever little they care about holiness. They go to the sanctuary to be comforted, as well as the tried and harassed Christian.

Hence arises danger, as well as difficulty, in meeting, publicly and fully, the case of those who cannot redeem much time, nor always do the good they really wish: the concessions made on their behalf, may be perverted by those who dislike devotional retirement, into an excuse for so multiplying their worldly engagements, as to leave no time for reading or meditation, and but little for prayer itself. Still, neither the sheep nor the lambs of the Good Shepherd's flock, (who love and long for those green pastures and still waters, without being able to visit them often or continue at them long,) should be left to put the worst interpretation upon their own weakness, however *wandering* sheep may abuse the Shepherd's condescension. He will count as his sheep, and even carry in his bosom, those, who, although they cannot be so often at his feet as they wish, do not try to keep away, nor to get

away, from his feet. He will distinguish between those who cannot sit down to hear his voice frequently, because of pressing domestic duties, and those who seldom do so, because they prefer to "hear the voice of strangers." John x. 5.

The real question, therefore, in the case of those who have but little leisure, is,—What engrosses your time? Now, if duties which it would be sinful to omit, fill your hands and your heart all the day long, and even leave you fatigued at night, it will not be laid to your charge, as sin, that you were not much alone with God. You ought not to be much alone, when either a sick-bed or the care of the family requires your presence. Then, "the beauty of holiness" lies in watching and working in a devotional spirit, and not in frequent nor in prolonged visits to the closet. That mother is not unholy, nor inconsistent, who has hardly a moment to herself, from morning till night, owing to the number of her children, or the sickness of her babe. That daughter is

not unholy, nor unlike Mary of Bethany, who shares her mother's toils and trials, or soothes the loneliness of an aged and infirm father. That wife is not unholy, nor unlike Mary, who, in order to make her husband's slender income sweeten his home and sustain his credit, works hard all the day. All these things are, indeed, done by many who care nothing about holiness, and who would not retire to meditate or pray, even if their time were not thus absorbed; and, therefore, the mere doing of these things, apart from its spirit and motives, proves nothing decisive as to the state of the heart before God. Still, it is equally true, on the other hand, that neither the time nor the care expended on these duties disproves the existence of holiness. There is, indeed, no true holiness, where there is no secret devotion; but there may be much of the former, when there is but little time for the latter: yea, the highest beauty of holiness often invests and enshrines the character, whilst the heart of a Christian must depend more upon frequent glances at the throne of grace, than

upon formal approaches to it. Then, to go through arduous domestic duty, in a meek and quiet spirit, which breathes prayer, even when busiest; or to watch and minister in the sick chamber, mingling prayer with tenderness and patience, and thus "doing service as unto the Lord," or for his sake, is as decisive of piety, and even "adorns the doctrines" of Christ as much, as any act of devotion, however spiritual, or any enterprise of zeal, however splendid.

There is, perhaps, no practical lesson of godliness so ill understood, as this one. The general sentiment of it is, of course, obvious to any Christian, and the theory of it quite familiar; but, how few enter so fully into the spirit of the maxim, as to keep their piety from declining, or their peace of mind from evaporating, when they have much to do or to endure in their family! Then, it is no uncommon thing for a pious wife, or a widowed mother, to complain that domestic cares have brought a cloud upon all her hopes and evidences of grace, and such deadness and dark-

ness upon her soul, that she seems to herself no longer the same being she was, but like an apostate from faith and godliness. Thus, she thinks, that she has lost her piety, whilst doing her duty to her family!

And she certainly has lost some of her piety, although not in the sense she means, nor yet to the degree she suspects. She has lost that holy freedom at the throne of grace, which once made her closet the house of God and the gate of heaven; she has lost that power of appropriating the great and precious promises, which once made her Bible so dear; she has lost that control over her own thoughts and feelings, by which she could once concentrate them upon the things which are unseen and eternal, whenever she really tried to pass within the veil of the invisible world; and, above all, she has lost sight of her own warrant and welcome to trust in Christ, which once set and kept every thing right. Now, these are serious losses, and may well be sadly bewailed, and even somewhat feared as to their conse-

quences; for it is not so easy to repair these spiritual injuries, as it is to bring them on. They might all have been kept off, however, if she had studied beforehand the *secret* of blending the spirit of prayer with the efforts of maternal devotedness, and the *art* of turning the duties of life into acts of godliness; but, having, like many, grown up under the idea, that nothing was really a part of her piety but what was a positive act of religion, and thus being in the habit of estimating her piety more by her delight in divine things, than by her conscientious discharge of ordinary duties, she is, of course, sadly thrown out and disconcerted, whenever the pressure of ordinary duties lessens the sense or lowers the spirit of her religious observances: whereas, had she fully gone into the question of personal holiness at her outset in the divine life, she would have soon discovered that it is the very *beauty* of holiness to do that best which is most wanted at the moment; for even the cradle may be made an altar, and the nursery a little sanctuary, and

household duties almost sacramental engagements! But if these things are looked upon as the mere routine of life, or as unfavourable to godliness; and if only the time which can be spared from them is considered *improved* time for eternity, then, of course, there must be a sad sense of declension in piety whenever more time than usual is demanded by them. But why not consider that unusual portion of time which is required in seasons of domestic care, as improved for eternity, as well as the time spent in devotion? Why not do every thing as service unto God, as well as the things you call service done to him? Surely, if all Christians may eat and drink so as to *glorify* God, Christian mothers may watch and work for their family to the praise of the glory of his grace.

I am not inclined to resolve so many things into satanic influence as some are: there are many of our faults and failings but too easily accounted for by the treachery of our own hearts and the want of consideration: still, I cannot help suspecting that Satan has not a

little, yea, much, to do with creating and keeping up the popular notion, that nothing is spiritual religion but spiritual exercises and emotions. Not, indeed, that he is any friend to spirituality of heart or habit: there is nothing he hates so much, or tries more to hinder. He can, however, transform himself into an angel of light, and thus seem to plead for highly spiritual religion, and for extraordinary devotion, whilst, in fact, he is endeavouring to prevent all religion and devotion too.

It is not sin alone, nor worldly pleasures only, that Satan throws false colours over: he can exaggerate the claims of holiness, as well as soften the aspect of sin and folly. He often labours to make out the necessity of too much religion, as well as to prove the sufficiency of too little: I mean, that just as he tries to persuade some that the ceremonial forms of religion are quite enough, or as much as can be expected in our busy world and imperfect state, so he labours to persuade others that nothing amounts to saving piety but a heart

all love, a spirit all heavenly, and a character perfectly holy. In like manner, he adapts his wiles to those who see through the fallacy of such extremes; putting it to themselves to say, whether they might not as well do nothing at all in religion, as do so little; whether it would not be less dangerous to make no profession of godliness, than to have only a spark of its power; or, at least, whether it would not be better to give up prayer entirely, until they can secure more time and composure, than to continue it in the very imperfect way they are now compelled to do?

This is an appeal to the conscience of a harassed mother, which she little suspects to come from the lips of Satan; and yet he is as busy in "taking advantage over" her, whilst thus trying to make her give up what she attempts in religion, as when he beguiled Eve to aim at being god-like in another sense than she was so. At this point, therefore, it is peculiarly necessary to act on the injunction, "Resist the Devil." That cannot be done effectually, how-

ever, by any process which does not turn the duties of life into acts of godliness. He will not "flee from you," whilst you merely analyze and scrutinize his wiles and devices; he will try new fiery darts as fast as you defeat the old, by mere arguments; he will stand at your right hand, resisting you, whilst you only resist him by detecting him. When did he leave the Saviour? Not until he saw that nothing could divert him from the "*work* the Father gave him to do." Satan tried first to set him against that work, by the poverty it involved; then to set him upon a new process of doing it; and then, to engage him in other work, altogether different; but all in vain. Satan found nothing in the Saviour averse to the will of God, notwithstanding all the labour, privation, and suffering which the great work of redemption involved. "Then the devil left him, and angels ministered unto him." And by no other process than that of adhering to the work God has given us to do, can we resist the devil so as to make him flee from us.

I do not forget (I never more remembered or admired than at this moment) that Christ resisted temptation by opposing to it the express word of God. It was, however, not the quotations of Scripture, but the practical purpose for which they were quoted, that discomfited the tempter. The Saviour drew upon the word of God, that he might not draw back from the work of God; he wielded weapons from the armory of heaven, that he might go steadfastly through whatever the Father had given him to do or endure on earth.

I know well that there is no parallel between our work and the work of Christ; but still, our sphere, and its duties and hardships, are the appointment of God, as well as Christ's were so. It is not by accident that one mother has much to do, and another much to suffer, and a third much both to do and endure: these heavy crosses are as really heavenly appointments as the cross of Christ was, although not for the same purpose. Accordingly, in some things we recognise, and even

act on this principle, in express imitation of the Saviour's example. When the cup of bereavement or affliction is put into our hands, we try to say, like him, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Not my will, but thine be done." Thus we really attempt to turn what we suffer much from, into an occasion of serving God well, and for submitting to him meekly. We regard this as true godliness, and try to make it holy submission.

Now, why not view every duty of life in the same light, and both go to it, and through it, as service required by God, and acceptable to God? Perhaps you find it difficult to conceive how some of your domestic duties could be invested with any thing like a spiritual or holy character: you may almost be inclined to smile at first, at the idea of giving them a religious aspect; and as to throwing the beauty of holiness around all the details of life, it may seem to you a profanation of divine things even to think of such a mixture. Be not frightened

or prejudiced, however, by words or fancies. God himself does many things similar to those you have to do: if you clothe your children, He clothes the earth with grass and flowers: if you feed your children, He feeds the young ravens when they cry: if you watch night and day, occasionally, over the couch of a sick child, afraid to stir from its side, or take your eye off it for a moment, He never slumbers nor sleeps in watching over his suffering children: God even "sits, as a refiner," by the furnace of his backsliding children. If you try to manage well, and to make the best of whatever happens, for the sake of those who love you and look up to you, He also makes "all things work together for good to them that love him." Thus God counts nothing beneath him, nor derogatory to his character, which is really required by any of his creatures, or needful in any part of his creation. He doeth all things, little and great, ordinary and extraordinary, in the same god-like manner; acting always in character, whether he sustain a sparrow or

create a world. He doeth all things in heaven and earth, indeed, without quitting his throne, or being disquieted by the multiplicity and weight of his engagements; but still, God occupies himself with our mean affairs, as willingly and fully as with the affairs of angels or the interests of the universe. Nothing in his glorious holiness holds him back from doing ordinary things well, because they are but ordinary things: he acts like himself, whether displaying the tenderness of a Parent or the majesty of a Judge, and carries out his great principles into all his operations.

If, then, He be not less holy, nor less beautiful in holiness, whilst attending to the minutest claims of his universal family, why may not "holiness unto the Lord be written" upon all the details of your family duty?

I am not pleading for what is called "mixing up religion with every thing," if by that is meant *talking* about religion whilst transacting the business of life, or giving a religious turn to every conversation. This is neither neces-

sary nor wise, as it is usually conducted by those who try it most: indeed, they are thus often guilty of "casting pearls before swine," and more likely to create prejudices against religion than to commend it. Even their own piety is in danger of being suspected of sinister design or of sanctimonious pretence, by this forced intermixture of sacred and common things. So far, therefore, as speaking perpetually about religion, or about every thing in religious phrases, is concerned, I have no sympathy with the habit, and see none of the beauty of holiness in it. I have, however, quite as little respect for both the vulgar and the sentimental proverb—"Business in its place, and religion in its own place." That really means, in the lips of those who use it most, "they are distinct things, therefore keep them separate;" a maxim equally treasonable and untrue! They are, indeed, *made* distinct things; but who made them so? Not God: he joins with the injunction, "not slothful in business," the commandment "Be fervent in spirit, serv-

ing the Lord." He says, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." It sounds ill, and looks ill, therefore, when men, professing to be Christians, say that they give themselves to business and religion in turn, and never try both at once. Such men do not understand the spirit of true religion, whatever adepts they may be in business.

I say this, however, far more in pity than in blame; for, as many godly women have grown up in the habit of going through their domestic duties, without ever imagining that there is any godliness in performing them well, so, many men, who have the root of the matter in them, have grown up in the habit of regarding their public duties in trade as no part of their religion. They, too, count nothing piety but what is done in the closet of devotion, and in the house of God, except what they may occasionally do in visiting the afflicted, or in relieving the poor; and thus both sexes confirm each other in the pernicious opinion, that ordinary duty is no proof of vital godliness.

This is a pernicious opinion, however well meant by some who hold it. Wherever, indeed, there is no devotion, nor any relish for divine things, or, when the soul and salvation are neglected through the attention given to worldly things, no diligence nor honour in business is religion in any sense. The industry of the bee, or the economy of the ant, might as well be called piety. It is, however, equally true, on the other hand, that idleness and dishonesty disprove all pretensions to godliness: there must, therefore, be something in the very nature of the ordinary duties of life not unfavourable to vital godliness, seeing the conscientious discharge of them is thus essential to the proof of its sincerity. Why, then, should a pious man allow himself to think that he is only serving the world during the hours and bustle of business? Why should he ever speak or dream of leaving his religion at home when he goes out into the world? He will not leave behind him his conscience, nor his sense of accountability, nor his regard to

truth, nor his respect for his good name, nor his holy fear of disgracing his profession: these follow him, like his shadow, into all the walks of public life. Not all the anxieties nor distractions of his business can make him lose sight of his great moral principles; and yet he says that he "left his religion at home." He means, of course, his penitence, his spirituality of mind, and his devotion; these are what he drops when he quits his closet and the family altar; and certainly these are things which cannot be much combined with worldly affairs. I will even readily grant that it would not argue much good sense, to attach much importance to the hasty glances or the passing thoughts of divine things, which may take place in the course of the day; these should not rank very high in the scale of evidences by which a Christian tests the reality of his conversion, or the safety of his state for eternity. Yea, I will go farther, and allow that if he cannot prove his faith without the scanty items of such evidence, he cannot prove it with them: they are

too few and feeble to lay much stress upon them.

These concessions do not, however, militate against my argument: it is just because they prove so little, that I advocate the necessity and propriety of going to business, day after day, in a spirit which shall make it all one embodied proof of true holiness. Now, it would be so, by going to it and through it, as a penitent before God, as a debtor before Christ, as a dependant before the Holy Spirit. A Christian man is all this; and by a little pains he might carry the consciousness of all this as regularly into the world as he carries his honesty or his integrity. He need no more lose sight of what the hope of eternal life leads him to be and do, than of what his credit and subsistence require of him. It is just as possible to act as a redeemed man, as to act as an honest man. And here would be the advantage of acting in this spirit—instead of coming home from business with all its deadening and distracting influence aggravated by the suspicion

of having been serving the world only, he would have the consciousness that he had been "doing service as unto God, and not as unto man;" and thus the conviction that neither the time nor the thought he had given to his public duties, had lessened his hold upon the divine favour, or drawn any judicial veil between him and the divine presence. Whereas the Christian who really leaves the spirit of religion at home, because he deems it useless or impossible to mind any thing but business during the hours of business, cannot so easily resume that spirit after the tear and wear of the day. He feels as if all he had been doing was somewhat sinful in itself, because it is so deadening and carnalizing in its influence. The consequence is, he is often afraid to go alone with God, after having been long and much absorbed in the world.

These remarks, although a digression in one sense, are not at all so in another. They will account in some measure for the false view you have taken of domestic duties. You have

so often heard a pious father, husband, or brother, complain of the unhinging and deadening effect of the cares of business on their minds, and have so often felt that family duties and cares had precisely the same effect on your own mind, that you, like them, are too much in the habit of considering the duties of life as drawbacks or hinderances to godliness. I am, therefore, very anxious to lead you into the scriptural views of this subject, not only on your own account, but for the sake of those whose spiritual welfare is dear to you; for, without saying a word in the way of counsel, or even of explanation, you may so illustrate the great truth that "all things may be done to the glory of God," as to convince your father, your husband, or your brother, that business may be made the handmaid of religion in the world, as well as at home.

Are you a mother? How holiness might beam and breathe in all your maternal duties and cares! Nay, do not smile in scorn nor in pity at this fond wish! I no more forget than

you do, that there is noise, nonsense, vexation, almost drudgery at times, in the nursery; your patience, as well as your strength, is often tried by your children; you occasionally find it no easy matter to keep your temper, or even to keep up your spirits, amongst them. Were they not your own children, you feel as if you never could go through what you have to do and endure. Now, I do not wonder at this; my only wonder is, how mothers can work and watch, nourish and cherish, as they do! There must be a magnetic charm, which fathers do not feel, in the sweet thought—"They are my own children." We, too, love them sincerely and strongly, as you well know; but, somehow, we could neither do for them nor bear with them, in your spirit, nor with your perseverance. A sleepless night or two quite exhausts our patience: the reflection, "They are my own children," does not electrify us as it does you, except when their life is in imminent danger. Well, just carry out this electric thought in your own maternal spirit, and ob-

serve how you feel whilst you say, in reference to their souls, "My own children! They will be mine for ever, both here and hereafter. Nothing can dissolve all my connexion with them. We may be widely separated on earth; we shall be divided by death, and it is not yet certain that we shall be all reunited in heaven: but wherever they are, in time or eternity, they will be my family. I can never forget them Until death, I shall instinctively look after them, wherever their lot may be cast: at the judgment-seat I shall look for them, whether they stand on the right hand or on the left: through eternity I shall remember them, wherever I myself am, or whatever I may be." Neither heaven nor hell can obliterate parental recollections; fathers and mothers will feel themselves to be fathers and mothers

"Whilst immortality endures."

These are solemn considerations. Do not, however, shrink from them; they may become equally sweet and sublime. Even already,

they have thrown your spirit in upon your maternal responsibilities, and far out amongst your parental prospects in both worlds. That glance of solicitude you darted through the assembled universe, in search of your children, when you realized the judgment-seat, proves that you are not "without natural affection," nor destitute of spiritual sympathy. And that breathless pause you made, whilst supposing yourself looking all around heaven for them, reveals to you how dear their eternal safety is to your heart, and how much their presence would heighten your happiness, even in the presence of God and the Lamb. What fine preparation these glimpses of the great white throne of judgment, and of the glorious high throne of heaven, are for maternal prayer at "the throne of grace!" Whilst the former thrones are looked at, the latter cannot be overlooked. You feel through all your soul, that any mother, if allowed, would pray for her children at the former thrones, if prayer could avail there: and will you neglect to

pray for *your* children at that throne, where alone it is allowed or useful? If you do neglect this duty, it is not likely that God would gratify you with either the company, or a sight, of your children in heaven, even if both they and you should be in heaven. But a prayerless mother in heaven—is an anomaly. Her children are more likely to miss *her* there, than she is to miss them; or, both to meet in hell!

Neither, however, need miss the other in heaven. Both may meet in one mansion of glory, if both mingle their prayers at the throne of grace. Heaven is not so inaccessible or uncertain to families, *as families*, as some seem to fear. We must not judge from appearances in this matter. Heaven, as it is revealed in the Bible, is a family-house, where "it may be well with us and our children for ever." God has said so. We must not, therefore, regulate our opinion of His good will towards the families of those that fear him, by the way in which some of their children turn out. The

real question is,—Did those parents take God's *plan*, in both its letter and spirit, for training up their children? That all godly parents have done something, yea much, for their families, compared with what the ungodly do, there can be no doubt. But how few even believe—that there is a positive certainty of *success*, pledged by God, to all who bring up their children in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord!" The generality treat this promise as a lottery, in which there are more blanks than prizes. Thus both the faithfulness and the sincerity of God are dishonoured. But, Mothers! it is as true now, as when Paul said to the jailor at Philippi, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy HOUSE." The jailor had asked only, "What shall I do to be saved?" Paul, however, would not allow him to confine the question to himself. The promise is to children as well as to parents; and therefore the Apostle answered the question so as to include both.

If these preliminary hints awaken any curiosity, or win any confidence, towards the designs of this little book, you will not throw it aside just yet; nor wonder if, before resuming this part of the subject, I take great pains to secure the attention and confidence of daughters, as well as of mothers. Read the next chapter, therefore, on their account, or to your daughters; and do give weight to whatever is experimentally true in it, by setting your "seal" to its truth.

No. II.

A DAUGHTER'S PRINCIPLES ANALYZED.

In addressing you, "I will (first) incline my ear unto a Parable; I will open my dark saying upon the harp" of Allegory. And, should I close my appeal in the same way, you will forgive me. Both Rachel and Miriam are real characters, and will, I fear, recognise themselves: but you, I hope, will try in vain to identify either.

Both young men and maidens venerated the aged Sheshbazzar, and vied with each other in honouring his grey hairs as "a crown of glory." He was a *second* conscience to all the youth of Beersheba, who studied to maintain a good conscience towards God or man. When the young men looked upon the daughters of the Canaanites, and thought of allying themselves with "aliens from the common-

wealth of Israel," they remembered that Sheshbazzar would not bless the forbidden union; and turned their attention to the daughters of the Covenant. When the maidens of Beersheba were fascinated by the garb and bearing of the sons of Belial, they felt that they could not meet the eye of the holy Patriarch, and drew their veils closer around them in the streets. Thus all the plans of the young had a tacit reference to his opinion, and the hope of his approbation and benediction mingled with their brightest prospects. "*What will Sheshbazzar think of me?*" was a question, which, however simple in itself, disentangled whole webs of sophistry, and unmasked the most plausible appearances. It revealed the secrets of the heart to the conscience, and the frauds of the conscience to the judgment. It was, indeed, a simple question; but it searched the reins like "the candle of the Lord,"—because all who reflected, felt that the good old man could have no object but their good; and that whatever influence he had acquired over

them, was won, not by stratagem, but by weight and worth of character. It was the spell of his fine spirit, which, like the mantle of Elijah, cast upon the ploughman of Abelmeholah, drew them after him as with "cords of love." Amongst the daughters of the Covenant, who listened to his wisdom, and loved his approbation, Rachel was the most enthusiastic. She was modest as the lily of the valley, but sensitive as the tremulous dewdrops which gemmed it. Like the clouds of the spring upon Carmel or Hermon, she wept and smiled in the same hour. Her spirit soared at times like the eagle of Engedi, until lost in the light which is full of glory; and, anon, it drooped like the widowed dove in the gloomy avenues of Heshbon and Kedron. She was alternately glowing and freezing; too high or too low. In all things, but in her modest gentleness, she was the creature of circumstances. Even in Religion, she had no *fixed* principles. She was feelingly alive to its beauties, but dead to its real spirit. Whilst it inspired thoughts

which breathed, and words which burned, with immortality, she was enraptured with it: but when its oracles or ordinances led to thoughts of penitence, or words of humiliation, she had no sympathy of spirit with them. She wept, indeed, over her *fallen* nature; but not because it was fallen from the moral image of Jehovah. The loss of intellectual power, not the loss of holy feeling, grieved her. She felt deeply mortified, because she could not maintain all the mental elevation of a rational being; and she thought her mortification, *humility!* She deplored the weakness and waywardness of her mind, in the strongest terms of self-abasement; but not because her mind disliked secret prayer and self-examination. She lamented that she had so little communion with God; but it was not the communion of a child with a Father, nor of a penitent with a Saviour, but the communion of a poet with the God of nature—of a finite Spirit with the Infinite Spirit—that had charms for her. She admired the prophets; but not for the holiness which ren-

dered them temples meet for the Holy Spirit to dwell in, and speak from; but because of their mysterious dignity, as the ambassadors of Heaven. She gloried in the altars and mercy-seat of the temple; not as they were types of salvation by the atonement of the promised Messiah, but as they were the seat and shrine of the cloud of glory and the sacred fire.

All this Sheshbazzar saw and lamented. But Rachel was gentle, and he loved her; she had genius, and he admired her. Men of *one* idea thought her mad; and men with *half* a heart deemed her a mere visionary. Sheshbazzar regarded her as a young vine among the rocks of the Dead Sea, whose grapes are embittered by the bitumen of the soil; and he hoped, by transplanting and pruning, to displace its poisonous juices. But the difficulty was, to convince her, that even her *virtues* were like the grapes of Gomorrah, unfit to be presented "before the Lord, in the waive-offering of the first fruits," or to be mingled in "the drink-offering." They were, indeed.

so; for, like the vines of Gomorrah, she bore fruit to herself, not to the glory of God. Her morality was high-toned; but only because she reckoned immorality beneath the dignity of female character. Her taste was simple; but only because she deemed follies unworthy of her talents. Her sympathies were prompt and tender; but they were indulged more for the luxury of deep emotion, than for the sake of doing good. What became her—as a woman, and a woman whom Sheshbazzar reckoned "one of a thousand," was both the reason and the rule of her excellencies. She never prayed for grace to sanctify or sustain her character: and as her tastes and pursuits were far above even the comprehension, as well as the level, of ordinary minds, Rachel never suspected that her "heart was not right with God." The Elders of the city had, indeed, often told her so in plain terms, made plainer by the shaking of their hoary heads: but, although she was too gentle to repel the charge, she only pitied their prejudices.

Sheshbazzar, as she imagined, thought very differently of her; and his smile was set against their insinuations. He perceived this mistake, and proceeded to correct it. He had borne with it long, in hope that it would gradually correct itself. He had made allowances, and exercised patience, and kept silence on the subject, until his treatment of Rachel began to be reckoned weakness, and not wisdom, by his best friends. His plan had been to bear aloft his young eaglet upon his own mighty wings, until she breathed the air of spirits, and bathed in the light of eternity: and then to throw her off upon the strength of her own pinions, that she might, whilst he hovered near to intercept a sudden fall, soar higher in the empyrean of glory, and come down "changed in the same image," and humbled by the "exceeding weight" of that glory. But the experiment failed: she descended mortified because of her weakness, not humbled because of her unworthiness. He resolved, therefore

"To change his hand, and check her pride."

"Rachel," said Sheshbazzar, "the first day of vintage is near at hand, and there is but little fruit on my vines: could we not send to the Dead Sea for grapes of Gomorrah, and present them before the Lord, 'as a waive-offering, and pour them out as a drink-offering?'"

Rachel was surprised at the question; for it was put solemnly, and betrayed no symptom of irony.

"Grapes of Gomorrah!" Rachel exclaimed; "ask rather, if strange fire, or a torn lamb, may be safely presented at the altar of Jehovah? But Sheshbazzar mocketh his handmaid. The curse is upon all the ground of the cities of the plain; and moreover, the grapes of Gomorrah are as bitter as they are beautiful. Even the wild goats turn away from the vines of Sodom. What does my father mean? The form of thy countenance is changed! Like the spies, I will go to Eshcol or Engedi for clusters to present before the Lord; for the Lord our God is a *jealous* God."

"True, my daughter," said Sheshbazzar; "and if it would be sacrilege to present the grapes of Gomorrah in the waive-offering, because they grow on the land of the curse, and have imbibed its bitterness; how must a jealous and holy God reject the homage of a proud spirit? The fruits of that spirit draw their juices from a soil more deeply cursed than the Asphaltic,—and of which Gomorrah, when in flames, was but a feeble emblem."

"But, Sheshbazzar," said Rachel, "to whom does this apply? Not to your spirit; for it is a veiled seraph, lowliest in itself when loftiest in its adorning contemplations. And *my* spirit—is too weak to be proud. I feel myself a mere atom amidst infinity. I feel less than nothing, when I realize the Infinite Spirit of the universe."

"It is well, my daughter; but what do you feel when you realize Him as the HOLY ONE who inhabiteth eternity? Rachel! I never heard you exclaim, *God be merciful to me a*

sinner! You have called yourself an atom in the universe—an insect in the solar blaze—an imperfect grape on the vine of being: any thing, but a sinner. It was not thus that Abraham, and Job, and Isaiah, felt before the Lord. It is not thus that I feel. You think me like the grapes of Sibmah and Engedi, ripe for the service of the heavenly temple. Ah, my daughter! nothing but 'the blood of the everlasting covenant' keeps me from despair; and there is nothing else between you and Tophet."

Rachel trembled. She had never marked the humility of the Patriarchs, nor paused to consider what the soul and sin must be—seeing they required such an atonement. She retired weeping; and, for the *first* time, retreated into her closet to pray for MERCY.

However the first discoveries of the beauty of holiness may be made, and whatever may be

the first motives which induce any one to desire to follow holiness, neither its nature nor its necessity are rightly understood, until both the atoning sacrifice of Christ and the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit are duly considered. Until we look to the blood of the Lamb and the sanctification of the Spirit, as the only way of acquiring that holiness which constitutes meetness for heaven, no moral sentiments, however pure, and no sense of the beauty of virtue, however delicate, amount to "a clean heart" or "a right spirit" towards God. She who carries her inquiries after the principles of true holiness no farther than just around the circle of its duties, and over the surface of its proprieties, ill deserves the high privilege of possessing a Bible, and has no right to call herself a Christian.

It is, indeed, both proper and necessary to sit at the feet of Jesus on the Mount of Olives, learning morality from his precepts: but it is equally essential to sit at his feet in Gethsemane, where he trod the wine-press of the

wrath of God; and on Mount Calvary, where he made his soul an offering for sin; learning there, also, the real evil of sin, and the infinite expense at which it is pardoned and taken away.

In saying this, I do not forget nor undervalue the sweet influence which holy example exerts over some gentle and ingenuous spirits. The Shunamite is not the only woman whose attention and good will to piety have been conciliated, in the first instance, by the weight and worth of a ministerial character like Elisha's. Day after day, she saw the prophet moving about in his sphere of public duty, like a commissioned angel, with equal meekness and patience; happy in his work, and transparent in all his character: and this contrast between Elisha and hirelings, led her to cultivate his friendship. "She said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passes by us continually: let us make a little chamber on the wall, I pray thee; and set there for him a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick."

In like manner, the lovely character of exemplary parents and friends, has often suggested the first idea of the beauty of holiness, and excited the first desire to be holy. The simple reflection, "I should so like to resemble them," has not unfrequently led to imitation. But imitation, whenever it has been attempted on a large scale, has soon compelled to an examination of the secret springs of eminent holiness. The want of success, or the waywardness of some temper, makes the young candidate pause and ask, why she could not equal her models, nor realize her own wishes. She expected to be as much a heroine in practice and perseverance, as she felt herself to be in theory. She took for granted, that she had only to resolve and try, in order to be as good, as amiable, as holy, and happy in religion, as the friends she admired most; but the fond aspirant after high moral excellence, soon found out that it was not so easily attained as she imagined, and that she herself was not so strong in principle as she supposed.

This discovery is always the result of honest endeavours to be very like very lovely Christians. It is, however, a most important discovery. It may stop effort for a time, and even discourage hope not a little; but it leads to such an observation of the principles and motives of those we have failed to copy, as soon explains our failure. The discovery of our own weakness is followed by a discovery of the *secret* of their strength and success. We cease to wonder, (however we may continue to weep,) that we made so little progress, when we resolved to be as good as the best; for we both resolved and tried in our own strength; or with such a vague reference to the grace of God for help, that success was impossible. It could not be otherwise, whilst the cross of Christ was to us only a solemn fact in sacred history, and the work of the Holy Spirit merely a cardinal article of the creed. Not in this tame form did these great truths stand (we saw!) before the minds of those we admired and wished to resemble. We discovered that

the Cross and Grace were the only pillars on which their hopes rested; the very poles upon which their habits and spirits turned; the very source and centre of all their religion and morality. This, we saw, made the difference between them and us.

These are invaluable lessons in experience, whether acquired in this way, or by some other process. They are, however, incomplete lessons, whilst they only lead us to perfect our *theology*, by bringing it up to the standard of eminent Christians. It is, indeed, well to take care that both the Cross and Grace have all that prominence in our creed which they hold in their creed. It is wise to mark minutely how they glory in the Cross, and depend on the Spirit, at every step and stage of their piety. It is, however, quite possible to embrace the faith of the saints, because it is *their* faith, without embracing it for their chief reasons. They glory only in the cross of Christ because they are *sinners*. This is their first and chief reason for believing as they do.

I pray your attention to this fact. Your pious friends are not, indeed, uninfluenced by other considerations than their own sinfulness, in thus making the Atonement "all and all," as the ground of their hope. They are much influenced by the example of the great cloud of witnesses around the throne; all of whom washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: by the example of the innumerable company of angels; all of whom also look into the sufferings of Christ with untiring wonder and intense admiration: and especially by the example of the Father, who counts the Cross the glory of his moral government; and of the Holy Ghost, who confines his agency to the exhibition and application of the things of Christ, for the glory of Christ. All these considerations are both load-stars and leading-stars, to bring and bind the confidence of your friends to the Lamb of God. They often help their faith, by remembering how the noble army of martyrs shook the flames and the scaffold with the shout,

"None but Christ!" and by listening to the New Song, as it swells for ever louder from all the harps of heaven. Even the historic truth and the moral triumphs of the doctrine of the Cross, have no small influence in confirming the faith of the saints in the sacrifice of Christ. They are glad, too, that the wisdom of philosophy is foolishness, and the inspiration of poetry tameness, compared with the sublimity and glory of the Cross.

Still, whilst all these considerations have much weight with intelligent and devoted Christians, they are most influenced by a deep sense of their own personal guilt and danger. They feel their *need* of such a Saviour as the Lamb of God. They not only see that there is nothing but the blood of Christ to cleanse from sin: they see also that nothing else could cleanse them from *their* sins.

Now, I need hardly say to you, that the Christians you admire most, were not greater sinners, before their conversion, than others. In general, they had quite as fair a character

as their neighbours, so far as morals were concerned. They were not, therefore, driven into their deep self-condemnation, nor into their fear of perishing, by having been worse than others. How, then, came they to think, and feel, and act towards the Saviour, just as if they had been the very chief of sinners? You know that they are not pretending, when they adopt humiliating confessions, nor when they look with streaming eyes and bleeding hearts to the Cross. The real secret is this: they know their own hearts; watch their own consciences; test their own spirits; and thus see and feel their natural alienation from God. What pains, humbles, and alarms them chiefly is, the awful want of love to God, which marked their early history; and the sad weakness of their love to Him, since they believed that "God is Love." Hence, they can hardly conceive how their ingratitude and insensibility can either be forgiven or removed. Even with all the glories and grace of the Cross before them, they find no small difficulty in try-

ing to hope for their own salvation: because neither that salvation itself, nor the amazing sacrifice at which it was provided, has such an influence over them, as they know it ought to have. Thus they find causes of fear or suspicion, even in the very grounds of hope; because those grounds do not affect and interest them more fully. It is, therefore, their sins against the Cross, quite as much as the sins which made the sacrifice of the Cross necessary, that makes them feel so self-condemned. They see enough, and more than enough, to condemn them, in the way they have treated the Atonement made to save them. Thus, there is neither pretence nor parade in their humility. They do—cling to the Cross, not only because they wish to be holy, but also because they are conscious that they deserve the wrath to come. They glory in it, not merely that they may be sanctified, soul, body, and spirit; but also that they may be plucked as brands from the burning.—The peril of perishing, as well as the love

of holiness, influences both their conduct and spirit.

Now, unless these be your reasons for giving the Cross a higher place in your esteem than it had at first, you cannot have "like precious faith" in it with your pious friends; nor can it have all that holy influence upon you which it has upon them. You must trust it as a sinner, if you would have it transform you into a saint. You must flee to it as the only refuge of the Lost, as well as the only remedy of the unholy.

You see this, I hope. I am quite sure you will consider it. It may not be altogether pleasant or plain to you at the first; but you have already thought so much about Christ, and that too for a holy purpose, that you cannot stop now. Your sense of duty, and your desire to be truly pious, are too strong, to allow you to halt half-way between Sinai and Calvary. I will, therefore, suppose at once, that even this night you will retire to your closet, and bow down before God, as a penitent, and not

merely as a candidate for immortality, as a sinner, needing deliverance from the wrath to come; and not merely as an imperfect being, needing only improvement. Remember!—there are none in heaven, but those who came to the Mercy-seat, in this spirit, and for this purpose. This is, also, the very spirit of all those on earth, whose piety you must admire.

Now, I should not at all wonder (however much you may) if, on taking this view of your own case, you find yourself led into self-abhorrence and self-abasement, as well as into self-condemnation. It would not surprise me in the least, to hear you cry, "Behold, I am vile: unclean, unclean; God be merciful to me a sinner!" Nay; I should not be much startled, even if you were so alarmed, at first, by the discovery of your own alienation from God, as to be unable for a time, to hope or pray for mercy. Your guilt and vileness, in caring so little about the God of salvation, may open upon you in lights, which shall only reveal "clouds and darkness" around the Mercy-

seat at first: or, some one sin, which has only made you ashamed hitherto, may so shock your conscience, that you may feel as if you never could get over it, nor be able to look up to God again with complacency or composure.

This is not an uncommon case. Your pious friends have felt in this way at times. Many feel so, without knowing how to obtain relief, or how the blood of Atonement meets such a case. Now, do *you* know? Do you see how the blood of Christ can so "purge your conscience from dead works," that you can henceforth "serve the living God," without slavish or tormenting fear? Do you see enough in the grace and glory of the Atonement, to lift your spirit over that sense of sinfulness and unworthiness, which creates only a dread of God, or doubts of his willingness to save? If not, you have yet much to learn on this subject. Indeed, you have not yet got hold of that "horn" of the golden altar of the Atonement, which enables a self-condemned penitent to lift herself above slavish fear, when she draws nigh to

God in prayer, in sacraments, and in practical duty. Thus, you are not prepared to serve the Living God "without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of your life."

And yet, you desire to do so. You not only feel it to be your duty to serve "the Lord in the beauty of holiness," but you are trying to serve Him better than formerly, and willing to increase and improve your present scale of service. Like the Israelites at Shechem, in the days of Joshua, you are not only ready to say, "The Lord our God will we serve," but ready also to enter into an everlasting covenant of obedience. They, you recollect, insisted upon ratifying their promise and intention by a covenant, and even engaged to become witnesses against themselves if they drew back. So far, this was a fine spirit. Joshua must have been highly gratified to hear his dying appeal,—"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve,"—thus warmly and honestly responded to. I say, honestly; for there is no reason whatever to doubt the sincerity of the

people, when they thus pledged themselves. Nor do I at all doubt your sincerity. You may, however, doubt my kindness or candour, when I venture to say to you, what Joshua said to them, "Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is a Holy God." I mean, you cannot serve him "acceptably," until you are influenced by other and higher motives than either the love of virtue, or the fear of punishment. Even some distinct and deliberate reference to the merits of Christ, and to the grace of the Holy Spirit, as necessary to help or perfect your well-doing, will not mend the matter. Even a determination to say, after having done your best, "We are but unprofitable servants," will not forward your success much. Ye cannot serve the Lord acceptably, but as an entire debtor to the blood of Christ for mercy and grace; "for He is a Holy God—a Jealous God—the Living God!"

These distinctions are not too nice, nor these cautions unnecessary, nor these solemn views of God uncalled for, in your case. You need

them all, and will never do so well as you wish, until you apply them all to yourself. You doubt this, perhaps? It may seem to you, that you could not serve God at all, if you were to take such awful views of his character. You may be ready to say, "Who can stand before this Holy Lord God?" Accordingly, you deem it better, as you really wish to serve him, to take sweet and soothing views of his character; to dwell chiefly upon His love and mercy; to realize God as a Father, and to rely upon Him as a Friend. And, in one sense, you are right in judging thus. Indeed, it is to this lovely view of the Divine character I want to bring and bind all your thoughts and affections. Nothing is further from my intention, than terrifying you at the God with whom you have to do. I would teach you to lay your head upon his knee—yea, to lean it upon his bosom—as calmly, and as confidingly, and as cheerfully, as ever you hung upon a father's neck, or reclined upon a mother's bosom. It is not your pleasing ideas of God I want to in-

terfere with. I am not leading you to question the truth of them; but to question your own right or warrant to take such views of God, whilst your views of the Saviour are so imperfect. Now, they are very imperfect, if you see and seek in His merits nothing more than weights to turn the scale of mercy in your favour; or to make up the defects of your obedience. This is not making Christ "all and all" in salvation. This is not glorying in the Cross only. This is making Christ but *half* a Saviour!

You may not intend this; nor yet be aware, exactly, that such views of the Lamb of God do not warrant confidence in the love, nor hope in the mercy, of God. Such views, however, do not warrant either. They are better than Socinian views, which embrace nothing but the example of Christ; and better than legal principles, which look for mercy as the reward of good works, independently of Christ. I readily allow this, and even wish you to attach very great importance to the great difference which

thus exists between your creed and Socinianism. You regard the Saviour as God manifest in the flesh, and his death as a real sacrifice for sin. You wonder how any one can pretend to believe the Bible, and yet deny the Divinity and atonement of Christ. You feel, that were you to treat Christ as merely a good man and a great martyr, you would have no scriptural right or warrant to regard God as a Father, or even to hope in His mercy. So, then, there are some views of Christ so low, and so unlike the Bible, that you yourself would not venture to hope, if you held them. At least, you see clearly that they do not go far enough to justify hope in God.

Now, we shall come to the point of my argument with you. I have cheerfully allowed, that both your opinion of Christ, and your dependence upon him, go much farther than Socinianism or Legalism; but the question is,—Do they go far enough to warrant you to take those encouraging views of God which, you say, are essential, if you would either love or

serve him well? Now, you yourself will allow, that if your dependence upon Christ come as far short of the degree in which Paul and the first Christians depended on Him, as Socinianism comes short of what you believe, then you too are wrong, and reckoning without your host, whilst taking for granted that you are welcome to hope as much as you like in God. Why are you not as much afraid to differ from Paul, as you would be to agree with Priestley? Weigh this question; for there is almost as great a difference between your dependence and Paul's, as there is between your opinion and Priestley's. You may not have intended, nor even suspected, this; but it is true. Yes; and the contrast is not between you and Paul only: it is between you and all the dead in Christ. Your song of redemption is not the "New Song" of the Redeemed in heaven. Your heart is not in unison with the harps before the throne, whilst you can speak or think about the blood of the Lamb as a balance for your defects and imperfections.

There is no such sentiment in the oracles of God on earth, or in the lips of saints in heaven. There, all the glory of salvation is ascribed to the Lamb slain.

Now, it is this sense of debt to the Atonement, and this degree of dependence upon Christ, that I want you to cultivate as your warrant and welcome to fill your whole soul "with all the fulness" of God's paternal love and tenderness. But neither this sense of debt, nor this exclusive dependence, can ever be felt, whilst you avoid to think of God as the LIVING God: and this—you do!

Are you surprised at this charge? Do you suspect that I attach any mystical meaning to the scriptural expression, "the Living God?" I do not. I mean nothing more by it, in regard to *all* the perfections of the Divine character, than you mean in regard to *some* of them. I think them all equally alive and lively: but you do not. You do not, indeed, think the justice of God dead; nor the holiness of God dead; nor the jealousy of God dead.

You revolt at the bare idea, and feel it to be vulgar, if not profane, to use the word "dead" in any connexion with God. I am glad you feel thus afraid of the word: let your fear extend also to the thing.

Look, then, at all that you mean by the word "living," when you connect it with the Love, the Mercy, or the Grace of God. There, you give it a wide and warm meaning. The ever-enduring life and liveliness of these lovely perfections, you believe and admire. Were they dead—all your hopes would die too. And well they might! A God without love or mercy, would be as useless to us as a dead or dumb idol: for as He would do nothing for us, it would be the same to us as if He could do nothing for us.

I keep as fast hold, you see, as you can, upon all that you admire in the Divine character. I am equally afraid with yourself (indeed, I can as little afford as you) to lose sight of even one ray of His infinite love. Like you, I rejoice with joy unspeakable, that it liveth and abideth

for ever, in all the lustre and warmth of its original glory. But then—so does also the holiness, the justice, the integrity of God! These, too, are without variableness or the shadow of turning. But you do not rejoice in them. You are even afraid of them. You do not allow yourself to exclude them from the character of God, nor to treat them as if they were dead: but their life is not much connected with your hopes. You do not care to look often at the Holiness and Justice of God, as they live and move and have their being in the Gospel.

Now, this is what I meant, when I charged you with avoiding to think of God as the living God. You do not think him as much *alive* to the glory of his justice and holiness, as to the glory of his grace and mercy: and the consequence is,—you do not feel all a sinner's need of the blood of Christ. Holiness and justice had, however, quite as much to do with the Atonement and it with them, as love or mercy had, or they with it: and just because you have to do with both, and both with you. Think of this!

And now, just suppose for a moment, that you had to deal only with the strict justice and the perfect holiness of Jehovah: how, in that case, would you use the blood of Atonement? What stress would you lay upon it, if you knew nothing about any love or mercy but just what it implied? Would you, then, employ it only as a weight to turn the scale in favour of your soul and your services? Do you not see, yea feel, through all your spirit, that you would require to plead the merits of the Atonement, even in order to be *allowed* to serve God? Yes, in order to be permitted to serve Him at all!

We think it a very great thing indeed when we are willing to serve God at all; and thus we are ready to take for granted, that he must be well pleased whenever we really try to serve him. And, in one sense, all this is very true. But, how came any one to be willing to serve God acceptably? How came God to be willing to accept any service from fallen man on earth? This does not take place in hell. Fallen

angels are neither made willing, nor allowed to serve God. Why? No atonement opened a new and living way to God for them. Christ took not upon him their sins nor their nature; and therefore they would not be permitted to try the service of God, even if they were inclined, which they are not.

Here, then, is the point at which you should begin to re-study your own need of the Atonement. You want it first to warrant you even to *speak* unto God in prayer, about either your own salvation or His service. For, what right have you or any one, to pray for mercy, or to offer yourself as His servant? Not the shadow of a right, from what you are, nor from what you can do. Had not Christ taken upon him your nature and your doom, as a fallen creature, you durst no more have prayed, or served, than fallen angels dare. You owe all the opportunity you have, and all the inclination you feel, entirely to His sacrifice. But for it, there would have been no more means or aids of grace on earth, than there is in hell.

You really must not allow yourself to be led away from a full sight and sense of your need of Christ, by the circumstances of the world. You see, indeed, something as natural and regular in the means of grace, as if Christianity were the religion of nature; for the Gospel takes little children into the school of Christ, and makes as much use of all that creation or providence affords to illustrate salvation, as of all that heaven and eternity furnish to commend it. This is, indeed, a world almost as full of the goodness and glory of God, as if it were neither a rebel nor a fallen world. The system of religious means and motives, which is around you, is also, as much adapted to the faculties and condition of men, as we could well imagine a system of mental discipline or moral government to be, to angels or a newly made world of human beings; for it touches man at every point of his nature, circumstances, and time. But all this, instead of being allowed to hide from you the real or the full place which Christ holds in the eco-

nomy of human affairs, should illuminate that place, and make him appear "all and all" in the whole array of temporal, intellectual, social, moral, and providential good, which beams and breathes around you. For it is all here, just because, and only because, He kept or brought it here by his Mediation on our behalf. But for that, all temporal blessings would have been as much withdrawn from the earth, as they are from hell; and our world would have been as destitute of means or motives to be religious, as is the prison of fallen angels. It is not, therefore, your actual sins only, nor the plagues of your heart alone, that create your absolute and equal need of a Saviour, in common with the worst. You are one of a fallen and guilty race; one of an apostate and impure family; and one of them by your own acts and inclinations, as well as by descent and inheritance. You have, therefore, no personal right to cherish the shadow of a hope, nor to offer a prayer or a service unto God. You owe it entirely to the Atonement, that you are

allowed to worship or bow down before Jehovah, either as a suppliant or as a servant. Do not lose sight, therefore, of your own condition, by looking round upon characters inferior to yourself. Many, alas, are far inferior both in their habits and spirit; but still, you are not so much above the worst of either sex, as you are beneath the standard of both the Divine image and law. Besides, what is it to you, whatever others are? You are guilty and unholy in your own way and degree: and for no guilt, defect, vanity, folly, or evil, of heart or character, is there any remedy or remission, but in the blood of the Lamb.

The following allegory will, perhaps, illustrate this Essay. In all but her dilemma, I commend Miriam to your imitation. Alas, she did not convert Jared.

Jared and Miriam sat together by "the waters of Shiloah that go softly." The setting sun flushed the calm rivulet as it flowed on towards the reservoir of the temple.

"There, Jared," said Miriam, "is an em-

blem of my church. The Jordan discharges itself into the DEAD SEA; but the waters of Shiloah terminate in the Temple of God. Oh! that *we*, like the fountains of this sacred stream, mingling their waters, could unite in sentiment, and thus flow calmly on to the heavenly temple of God and the Lamb. But as I cannot return to JUDAISM, and you will not quit it—we can never be 'one spirit.'"

"Miriam, my own Miriam! you *must* return to the God of our fathers. Know you not that the 'ANATHEMA MARANATHA' of the Sanhedrim will be pronounced on you, from the chair of Moses, at the next new moon? Surely you will not, by obstinacy, incur the *great* excommunication of the sanctuary. Why should you imagine yourself wiser than the ELDERS of Judah? Let me lead you back to the 'horns of the altar,' to ratify your vows to God and to me."

"Jared!" said Miriam, solemnly and firmly, "the great excommunication of the Sanhedrim will sound to me as did the threatenings of

Sennacherib, King of Assyria, to Hezekiah;—as 'raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame.' I shall pity the BOANERGESES, and despise their thunders. And as to my vows unto you, they are inviolate; although their fulfilment is delayed by circumstances, I have no wish to retract my betrothment; and if I had, I know not that Christianity would *sanction* the breach."

"The blessing of the God of Jacob be on you for this assurance, Miriam! but I cannot think well of your hardihood; it is not the heroism it *seems* to be."

"No, Jared; nor is it the *fool*-hardiness which you would insinuate! But, forgive me; I will not take offence. You mistake my new motives, and thus misunderstood my new character. I, however, cling to the CROSS of Christ, as if *nailed* to it, because I see nothing else between me and hell. My guilty and unholy soul can only be pardoned or purified by the blood of the Lamb of God; and, therefore, by that fountain I must—I *will* abide, even if,

like Abel, my own blood should crimson the ACELDAMA."

"Miriam! you amaze and confound me. This is absolute raving. A priestess of APOLLO could not be more extravagant when rushing from the Tripod. YOUR *guilty and unholy soul*, MIRIAM! How can you thus asperse your own pure nature and character? Your soul is pure as the snow upon the loftiest summits of Lebanon;—at least, its only taint is *heresy;* and that stain will soon be effaced by 'the waters of purification,' in the temple. Only quit the CHRISTIANS, and I shall soon rejoice over you, as in the days of old; singing this song to the harp of Judah, 'Though ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. SELAH!' You, Miriam, *unholy!* It is as if the dew of the morning were to charge itself with impurity."

"Jared, and could the dew, even on Hermon, speak, it would acknowledge that it was formed from *earthly* exhalations, and derived

its purity from the heavens. And as to your song of triumph, you will never be warranted, if I quit the CROSS, to sing it over me; 'the wings of a dove' are not given to the soul that it may 'flee away' from CALVARY. No; and were my wings like those of the seraphim, 'full of eyes,' their starry radiance would soon be extinguished, like the glories of LUCIFER, were I to cease from following the LAMB. But, Jared, you think lightly of SIN; you do not see its evil, nor feel its malignity. You regard nothing as *sin*, but IMMORALITY; and nothing as *corruption*, but VICE; and, because my character *is* as UNIMPEACHABLE as you suppose, you suspect me of feigned humility and extravagant penitence. These be far from me! I would that I were more humble and contrite; but always rationally—scripturally so."

"Well, Miriam, what *do you* mean by SIN? You surely do not imagine that your buoyant spirits and natural sprightliness are criminal. And as you have always honoured your pa-

rents, and kept the law from your youth upward, what have you to *repent* of? Your *only* sin has been against *me*; and you persist in it by delaying our marriage. I wish you would repent of *this* sin; and as John the Baptist said, 'bring forth fruits meet for repentance.'"

"Jared, be serious; my repentance towards God has no small or slight connexion with you. Until of late, I loved YOU *more* than GOD. This melancholy fact weighs heavily on my conscience."

"*Until of late!* And of late, then, Miriam, you have *conquered* the habit of loving me. Is this what I am to understand?"

"No! Jared; nor have you the shadow of a reason to *suspect* it. I, indeed, love God *more* than formerly, but I do not love you *less* than usual. I feel more solicitude—tender, intense solicitude, in your behalf, than ever. And, surely, you would not have me to love you *more* than God!"

"Certainly not: that be far from me, Miriam!"

"And yet, Jared, you, alas! love *me* far more than you love God; and is not that sinful and symptomatic of an unholy heart? You could not, indeed, love God *more* by loving me *less*; but supreme love to Him would regulate your love to me without at all lessening its cordiality. Oh, consider how we have alienated our hearts from God hitherto! We lived as if Jehovah had no claims upon our affection, or only such claims as the *ceremonial* law could satisfy. I appeal to your own conscience! How often, even while engaged in the duties of religion, 'God was not in all our thoughts!' We went to the Temple, and the Synagogue to meet each other on the SABBATH, and while our lips joined in the songs of Zion, our *thoughts* centred in ourselves. We regularly witnessed the sacrifices on the GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT; but our minds were wholly taken up with the sublime music of the silver trumpets, and the simple majesty of the Levitical processions around the golden altars. We partook of the PASSOVER for the

more pleasure of eating together. Often have we sat under this palm-tree while the priests were drawing water from the fountains of Shiloah, and 'pouring it out before the Lord; but we marked only their picturesque beauty, and felt only the transport of enjoying the scene together. And at the hours of the morning and evening sacrifice, while we repeated the PRAYERS, we did not 'pray in the spirit.' JARED! we lived for each other—not for the glory of God. This is the *guilt* which lies heavily on my conscience; these are some of the melancholy facts which convince me that *my* soul is naturally *unholy; and so is your soul.*"

"Well, Miriam, suppose I grant all this: see ye not what the concession involves? Nothing less than the duty of your *return* to Judaism; for if you are guilty by not honouring the sacrifices sufficiently, how great must your guilt become by neglecting and renouncing them entirely! You are caught—you are completely entangled in your own net, Miriam!"

"Ah, Jared, I had hoped, from the serious-

ness with which you listened to my confessions, that you were joining in them for *yourself*. I am disappointed; but, notwithstanding, I will answer you. I am not at all involved in deeper guilt by neglecting the sacrifices. They never were a real, but a *typical* atonement for sin; and, now that the LAMB of God is slain for the sin of the world, to honour *them* would be to dishonour HIM. On my own principles, therefore, a return from the glorious SUBSTANCE to the *shadows* of it, would render my guilt unpardonable. Besides, were it *safe* to return, what a loss of enjoyment I should sustain! The transition from the CROSS to your altars again, would be to me as Mount Moriah would be to Abraham, now that he has spent ages in Paradise; as the *cloud* on Sinai would be to MOSES, now that he has communed with Jehovah 'in light full of glory;' as the *wilderness* to the whole church of the first-born in heaven, now that they are without spot before the throne of God and of the Lamb. I do not affect what I do not feel; those spirits of just

men made perfect would lose only a *part* of their bliss by exchanging worlds; but were I to exchange the cross for the altar, all my happiness would change into 'a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.' For, if 'he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing?'"

"Your reasonings would be powerful, Miriam, and your solemn conclusions just, were your premises true. But a truce to this theological warfare;—it would suit a Sanhedrim of RABBINS better than it does a young man and a maiden of Israel, under the shade of a palm-tree, on the banks of Shiloah. It was not *exactly* thus that JACOB and RACHEL reasoned amongst 'the green pastures,' and by 'the still waters' of Padanaram."

"But it is thus they reason *now*, Jared, where 'the LAMB himself leads them to living

fountains of water' in heaven; and all the armies of heaven unite with them in admiring and adoring the Lamb of God. Besides, RACHEL had no occasion to reason with Jacob; his heart was right with God, and his soul safe for eternity."

"*Which mine are not!* you would say, Miriam,"

"Which, MINE *were not*, Jared, until I was reconciled to God, by the cross of Christ. Until the love of Christ won my heart, I was utterly unfit for heaven; for I had hardly one sentiment or feeling in harmony with the enjoyments or the engagements of Paradise. As a matter of *taste*, I had, certainly, revelled in the visions of IMMORTALITY, when it was illuminated by the Gospel, before I believed that Gospel. I could not resist the poetical attractions of the Christian heaven. Its thrones of light, crowns of glory, harps of gold, palms of victory, and its *many* mansions of bliss, fixed my imagination, and elevated my soul. I wished such an inheritance of glory. I felt

that a *different* heaven would not satisfy me. I saw, too, that it was 'Abraham's bosom' *opened;* the heaven of the FATHERS unveiled. This heightened its fascinations; but, at that moment, I discovered that I was utterly *unfit* for it. I desired a crown of glory, but felt that I could not place it at the foot of the LAMB;—a harp of gold, but not to sing the 'NEW SONG;'—a palm of victory, but not to wave it in the train of Christ! My proud heart revolted at the bare idea of such subjection to HIM. I said, in my haste, Were all this honour *confined* to Jehovah, the *Christian* heaven would be my choice; but to *divide* the honour, by worshipping the Lamb!—I spurned the thought. And yet, JARED, I did not feel at *ease* in doing so. I had *misgivings* of heart, as well as prejudices; and, in order to calm my fears, I was compelled to express unto Jehovah, my supreme regard to his glory, and my sincere veneration of his authority. These, I said, were my *sole* reasons for rejecting the Gospel. Then I began to strengthen these reasons, by

studying the DIVINE CHARACTER; for still the Christian heaven kept its hold upon my heart. I could not forget its scenes and society. I felt as if I was *not* right. I therefore *plunged*, as it were, into the contemplation of the Divine character. THEN, I saw, I felt, that I could not 'stand before God.' It flashed upon me with all the keenness of sensation, that I could not bear to see GOD AS HE IS! His holiness and justice appeared to me like the *dark* side of the Shechinal pillar to the Egyptians, overwhelming! And yet, it was 'the *beauty* of his holiness,' it was the *glory* of his justice, that overwhelmed me. I saw not, I felt not, at the time, their *terrors*. One deep, calm, solemn, awful conviction penetrated and pervaded my whole soul; it was, that *I could not bear an* ETERNITY *in the presence of* JEHOVAH! I had never thought of this before, but taken for granted, that, if I only were admitted to heaven, all would be right. But when I considered that I had no *delight* in the character of God, and that he could not love nor approve

this state of mind, I saw, at a glance, that, while my heart was thus dead to his excellence, I could have no communion with Him, nor with the spirits who were alive to it. THEN—then, Jared, came the inquiry—How can I be *reconciled* unto God? How can I become *such a* character, that He can look upon me, and I upon Him, with complacency, for ever and ever?"

"Go on, Miriam, this view of the matter is almost new to me."

"To me, Jared, it was *altogether* new. Until the immortality brought to light by the Gospel, drew my soul within the veil, and confronted me, in thought, with Jehovah, I had no idea that I was *unfit* for an eternity of his presence in heaven; for I had never before paused to consider, that, when he shall be seen 'AS HE IS,' then the light which reveals him, will reveal the *evil of sin*, in all its enormity—and 'the beauties of holiness,' in all their glory. But, to see sin thus, and feel its principles within me! to see holiness thus, and not feel all its

principles within me! would render the Divine presence intolerable. Heaven could not make me happy under such circumstances.

"Well might the Prophet exclaim, 'Who can stand before this Holy Lord God!' Jared! I could not stand before *you*, without confusion of face and heart too, were I conscious of not loving you as I ought. How overwhelming then would an eternity of the Divine presence be, without the consciousness of entire and intense love to God! I felt this—and felt, too, that I neither had, nor could produce such love to him. The necessity of it was self-evident, but the acquisition of it seemed impossible. Thus my own conscience shut me out of heaven. But, by this process, God was 'shutting me up unto the faith.' Accordingly, the moment I saw that, by believing his testimony concerning Christ, I should be justified and adopted, and thus placed under the sanctifying influences of his Spirit; I found it impossible not to love God. My way was then clear: and now I see clearly how the perfection of the

atonement will give eternal peace to the conscience, and secure such purity of soul, that the open vision of God will neither overpower nor embarrass the followers of the Lamb."

"Miriam, Paul should have made an exception in your favour, and suffered you to speak in the Church. I will certainly suffer you to speak at home, if you are always thus eloquent. I love eloquence; and, although I dislike your Gospel, as you call it, I will not contradict you. You shall have your own way in religion. Can you wish for more from 'a Hebrew of the Hebrews?" Miriam wept!

No. III.

EMBLEMS OF HOLINESS.

It was, indeed, a Poet who compared "the beauties of Holiness," to "*the dew of the morning*;" but the comparison is not a poetical license. It is poetry of the highest order: but it is also sober fact. The Harp of Juda breathed it in music: but an *inspired* hand swept the strings. David was a Prophet as well as a poet; and, therefore, we are both warranted and bound to say, when he predicts the number or the beauty of the Church, under the emblem of morning dew,—"The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Thus it was the Eternal Spirit who suggested and sanctioned the comparison; and as he is both the author and finisher of all true

Holiness, we may be quite sure that dew is neither a false nor a fanciful emblem of its beauty. Besides, splendid as Old Testament emblems of Holiness are, they are not so splendid as those which occur in the New Testament. The Apostles go far beyond the Prophets, in emblazoning Holiness. They assert its *sublimity*, as well as its beauty. "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, *from glory to glory*, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Thus Paul represents growth in grace as growth in glory; or progressive sanctification on earth as akin to progressive glory in heaven. Neither the evening stars of the Angelic hierarchy, pressing upon the spheres of its morning stars; nor the General Assembly of Time, rising to the stature and strength of the elder spirits of Eternity; nor, indeed, any ascent in the scale of heavenly perfection, could so dazzle him, or so eclipse the beauty of earthly holiness, as to make him ashamed to call its progress, a change "from

glory to glory." He goes even farther and higher than this; and declares that Believers are made "partakers of a Divine nature," by the influence of the great and precious promises. Thus it is, as the Saviour said, "*That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*" Both Prophets and Apostles understood this sublime fact, and therefore admired and celebrated the beauty of holiness. Paul, especially saw and pointed out the "*loveliness*" of whatsoever things are pure. Peter also does not hesitate to call female holiness an "*ornament*, which is, in the sight of God, of great price."

It is, therefore, neither wise nor humble to overlook "the beauties of holiness." God himself admires them, and calls them "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." And the Saviour (who never flatters, sentimentalizes, or compliments) pronounces, not only a special benediction upon "the pure in heart," but says also in unqualified terms, "Herein is my Father *glorified*, that ye bear much fruit." Thus the fruits of the Spirit are praised for

their beauty, as well as enforced for their necessity.

I am fully aware, however, that by bringing together these Scriptural views of personal holiness, I may startle, if not discourage for a moment, some who sincerely desire to be holy. It may seem, in this lovely and lofty form, an impossible thing in our own case. We may even be ready to exclaim, on casting a hurried glance around the circle of our pious friends,—Whose holiness is thus beautiful? Where is the sanctification to be seen which resembles the dew of the morning; or the grace, that is glory in the bud? This is, however, a hasty question. We have applied both these pure emblems to some of our friends, who were ripe for heaven, when they were removed from the earth. Our memory lingers upon the beauty, as well as upon the strength, of certain features of their character and spirit. We said when they died, and have often whispered to ourselves since, O that I were as "*meet* for the inheritance of the saints in light!" Yea, in

regard to some of the living in Jerusalem, we feel that their character is truly lovely. It is not spotless; but it is very transparent in integrity and benevolence. It is not "already perfect;" but like light, it is shining more and more unto the perfect day. Some of our pious friends have such worth of character, that their censure or approbation weighs with us, like the decisions of a second conscience, in our breast: we have such entire confidence in their candour and prudence; in their discernment and uprightness. Thus there are both Fathers and Mothers in Israel, whose holiness we feel to be very beautiful. Even the world cannot withold homage from it; it is so consistent. And in the fold of the Church, there are both sheep and lambs, which so hear the voice and follow the steps of the Good Shepherd, that we can easily believe in their case, how He who laid down his life for them, should lead them gently, and even "carry them in his bosom," when the way is rugged, or their strength exhausted.

Thus, there is some holiness on earth worthy of *admiration*, as well as of imitation. The image of God upon the soul, although not general, and never perfect in this world, is yet to be seen here and there, like "a lily amongst thorns," lovely in itself and illustrious by contrast. Neither the Abrahams nor the Sarahs, the Zechariahs nor the Elizabeths, the Rachels nor the Marys of antiquity, are without parallels in our own times, or without successors in our spheres.

"But none of them," it may be said, "admire their own character, or see any beauty in their own holiness. We admire them: but even the best of them abhor themselves, and can neither bear to speak nor think of their own excellence: How is this?" It is easily accounted for. Eminent holiness is always accompanied with profound humility. Accordingly, even in Heaven, the Seraphim veil their faces with their wings, and the crowned martyr *uncrowns* himself before the throne: no wonder, therefore, if the saints on earth hide

their faces in the dust of self-abasement, when they think or speak about themselves. The beauty of angelic holiness—the beauty of JEHOVAH'S glorious holiness, is before their eyes vividly and constantly; and in its presence, they may well say, "Behold, I am vile, and abhor myself:" for as the natural eye feels nothing but its own weakness when it gazes upon the meridian sun, so the eye of the mind can see nothing but deformity and imperfection in the heart and character, when it gazes upon the infinite and immaculate purity of the Godhead. No saint, who comprehends at all the heights or depths, the lengths or breadths, of the Divine image, can ever be satisfied with his own holiness, or cease to be ashamed of it, until he awake in heaven in all the beauty of the moral image of God. "As for me," said David, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness." Thus he who recognised in earthly holiness the beauty of the morning dew, was not satisfied with its purity or splendour. He saw in it also, as in dew, an evanescence,

and a weakness, and a sediment, which filled himself with shame, and kept him from complimenting others. Still, whilst this is, and ever ought to be, the humbling effect of clear and solemn views of Divine Holiness, it is of *himself*, not of his holy principles themselves that a Christian is thus ashamed. He does not think lightly of the work of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and conscience, because he thinks meanly of himself. He does not confound the Spirit with the flesh, nor the law of his mind with the law in his members, when judging of his own character. He sees, indeed, far more evil than good in himself; but he no more calls the good evil, than he calls the evil good. He is more pained by the plagues of his heart, than pleased with its best feelings or principles: but still, he is very thankful for whatever grace he has obtained.

In making these distinctions I do not forget, that there are times, (and these not few nor far between, in the case of some holy men and women,) when a real Christian is so absorbed

and shocked by the plagues of his heart, that he is ready to *unchristianize* himself entirely. In the hurry and agitation of these awful moments, he does confound the Spirit with the flesh: and instead of saying like Paul, "in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing," he says, "in me, soul, body, or spirit, dwelleth no good thing." He forgets the law of his mind, whilst the law of sin and death is thus in fearful power.

These *volcanic* bursts of the old nature are not, however, so lasting as they are overwhelming. Even whilst they do last, they are so deplored, and hated, and loathed by the Christian himself, that it is quite obvious to others, however he may overlook the facts, that neither his will nor his taste is a *consenting* party to the rebellion within. The horror it creates, proves that he loves holiness. The old man does not rebel in this way, where there is no attempt nor desire to "put on the new man, which is created after the image of God." Both "righteousness and true holiness," have struck their

roots deep into the heart, which thus bleeds and is ready to break, when nature overpowers grace. Indeed, it is "the root of the matter," making *room* for striking itself deeper and spreading itself wider, that causes this convulsion and struggling among the roots and branches of indwelling sin. Accordingly, Paul said, "*when I would do good*, evil is present with me." And again, "when the *commandment came*, sin revived." Thus it is only in the heart which tries to delight in the law of God, that this strong rebellion is much felt or noticed. There, however, it creates positive wretchedness whilst it lasts; and when it subsides, who can tell the joy of a Christian? It is joy unspeakable, when his gracious principles begin to lift up their heads again after the conflict: and it is "full of glory," when he finds himself looking again with some faith and hope to Christ and Holiness. Then, like Paul, he adds, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ:" this sweet song follows the bitter

cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Thus a Christian not only rallies after apparent defeat, but also learns the worth of his holy principles, which kept sin hateful when it was most headstrong, and holiness beautiful whilst most opposed. In ordinary circumstances, however, much caution is requisite, in rightly dividing our attention between the *necessity* and the beauty of holiness. Far better follow it, simply because without it no one shall "see the Lord," than follow it ostentatiously, to be "seen of men." The Pharisees forgot this, and became equally legal and lofty. As soon as they thought themselves righteous, they despised others. "Stand aside," soon grew out of the boast, "I am holier than thou." This melancholy fact should teach us to be even *jealous* of our own hearts. They are capable of being "puffed up," by moral, as well as by intellectual superiority. Self-complacency can plume itself upon graces, as well as upon gifts.

We must not, however, learn more from the warning example of the Pharisees than it was intended to teach. Now, it never was held up to convey or suggest the idea, that true holiness could betray us into pride or self-righteousness. No; the farther we follow real holiness, the farther we shall be from vanity and legality, and the lower we shall lie at the foot of the cross, and at the footstool of the mercy-seat. The holiest of the holy men and women of old, were always the humblest of their generation: and for this obvious reason;—they made the law of God the standard, and the image of God the model, of their holiness: and with these infinite mirrors for ever before them, they could neither admire themselves, nor divide their confidence between faith and works.

It was *ceremonial* holiness that betrayed the Pharisees. They made righteousness to consist in repeating a certain number of prayers; in paying the regular tithes, and in observing the stated feasts and festivals of the temple. In these things they were more precise or more

ostentatious than others; and thus they came to despise others, and to flatter themselves. Not a man of them, however, would or could have done so, if he had studied holiness in the moral law, or in the revealed image of God. Either of these, if honestly contemplated, would have been a "schoolmaster" to bring them to Christ. For, who can look at the perfection required by the law, or at the purity implied in conformity to the Divine image, and not see that a justifying Saviour and a sanctifying Spirit are equally necessary in order to her salvation? The soul that is intent upon true holiness, must depend on Christ and Grace entirely, or despair entirely: for all the natural reasons of duty are moral reasons for despair. *Mediatorial* reasons only can give either fear or hope to the soul, in the face of a law that requires absolute perfection, and of a heaven which admits nothing that defileth.

Now, we come to the point for close *self-examination*. We have seen that there are two extremes, to which we are equally prone,

by turns; sloth and self-complacency. By which of these are *we* most frequently betrayed? If by sloth—we have most need to study the *necessity* of holiness. The conviction, that without holiness we cannot see the Lord, is very weak, if we can relax in duty, or leave the state of our hearts to accident. Whenever we reckon it a trouble to take pains with our habits and spirit before God, we are upon the highway to backsliding. Both the heart and the conscience are perverted in no small degree, when watchfulness or effort ceases; and when either ceases, under any excuse or pretence drawn from the *grace* of God, it is high time to take alarm at ourselves: for even our understanding is far perverted, if we can pervert Grace into an apology for idleness and inconsistency. O yes; a *blight* has fallen upon the eyes of our understanding, as well as upon the tenderness of our conscience, if we can tamper with express law because free Grace abounds. For, what convert did not see, at first, more in grace, than even in law to bind

him to circumspect holiness? We certainly saw nothing in the Cross or the Covenant, to release us from high moral obligation or habitual watchfulness, when we first looked to them for mercy to pardon and grace to help. We intended and desired no compromise then, between God and the world. If, therefore, we now imagine that we see in the Cross or the Covenant any thing to warrant or wink at what our own conscience condemns, our "*eye is evil*:" for there is neither sanction nor shield in them to protect any wrong habit or temper. They reign and remain to crucify us to the world, and the world to us: and therefore our glorying in them is not good, so far as it admits a compromise between sin and duty.

But neither strong nor startling assertions, however solemn and severe, will remedy this evil effectually. Warnings, even declamations, do not reach the root of it. Many who can say as loudly as Paul, that his "damnation is just, who sins *because* grace abounds," do not like Paul make the abounding of grace a

universal and daily reason for abounding in holiness. They do not venture, indeed, to sin or compromise upon a *large* scale, because grace abounds; but they do some things, and leave other things undone, which they would not, and durst not, if grace did not abound. I mean, that were certain habits and tempers *beyond* the high-flood mark of the spring-tides of mercy, and *known* to be unpardonable, there would be a speedy rush of many from the dry places they now occupy, to the spot washed by the waves of pardon. It is, therefore, by regarding some wrong things as not unsafe nor unpardonable, that many persist in them. They would give them up at once and entirely, if they deemed them fatal, or utterly irreconcileable with a state of grace. Now this, although not exactly sinning *because* grace abounds, is very like it. For if a man do what he would not dare, if he counted it unpardonable, it is very evident that the abounding of grace, in some way, is his secret reason, although not his assigned one. He does not,

indeed, say, "Let us sin" to *any extent*, "because grace abounds;" but he evidently thinks, or tries to think, that he is not actually and altogether perilling or disproving his own hopes by his own indulgences. In a word, he has some way of making out to himself, that his *own* faults are not incompatible with being really in a state of grace; and, therefore, although he does not exactly justify them, he does not correct them, nor is he much afraid of them. "Grace," he says, "has to bear with something wrong, even in the best: and as my besetting sin is not of the very worst kind; and as there are some sins I would not commit, and some duties I would not neglect, for worlds, nor on any account whatever, I am not surely presuming very much, when I reckon myself in a state of grace, notwithstanding all my faults." Thus, it is rather some perverted notion about the securities of a *state* of grace, than direct and determinate presumption upon the abounding of grace, that betrays many into a lax holiness, or into al-

lowed inconsistencies of character and temper. I do not, therefore, confound such persons with those who "turn the grace of God into licentiousness;" but I do remind you and myself, and that with warning and weeping solemnity, that this was the first step of the antinomian process by which the primitive compromisers became licentious apostates and judicial reprobates. They begun their unholy career by trying to bend grace into a shelter for some one favourite sin; and, having persuaded themselves that one was not fatal, they went on from bad to worse, until they drowned themselves in perdition. At first they threw the cloak of Christian liberty over a few faults; by and by, over many; and, at last, they made it "a cloak for licentiousness" itself.

Now this, we not only do not want to do, but we abhor it as much as we dread it. It would be any thing but gratifying to us, if grace could be thus perverted with safety. What we are inclined or tempted to wish for,

is, such a forbearance or winking at what is wrong about us, as shall allow our faults to go on, without exactly throwing us out of a state of grace, before we find it convenient and agreeable to give them up: for we intend to crucify, eventually, the very things we now try to excuse. We even promise to ourselves and to God, that they shall not go on to the end of life, nor so near to it as to darken or embitter our death-bed. What a shame, then, to yield now to any thing we are thus pledged to conquer hereafter! Why, if our *general* character is rather consistent than inconsistent, should we allow, even for another day, any fault or flaw, which pains can cure, and prayer efface, to remain? It would cost us far less trouble to correct at once the worst fault we have, than it costs to get over the misgivings of heart and the twinges of conscience, which that fault occasions in the closet and at the sacrament. Besides, we have already made greater sacrifices to conscience and duty, than any we have to make. All our great sins are given up for

ever, and willingly too: and shall the *little* ones hold us in bondage?

Do we feel, in the presence of these exposures and remonstrances, any inclination to say,—"Why this is making grace as strict as Law could be: what then is the advantage of being under grace, instead of law, if so much circumspection and impartiality be requisite?"

Here is the advantage: "sin then shall not have the dominion over" us, if we be under grace: and if we reckon this no advantage, we do not understand the Law well, nor Grace aright.

Are we half-inclined to try the question in another form, and to say, "Still, as something wrong will remain, do whatever we may, why not let that fault remain, which we find most difficult to conquer? Might there not come a worse in its place?"

I will not call this pleading *for* sin. It may be merely put forward as clever casuistry, to evade close reasoning, which we have no wish

to set aside. Indeed, no Christian would dare to vindicate a sin, great or small, by name. He must regard even his chief fault as an infirmity, or a weakness, or an imperfection, before he can plead or apologize for it. As sin—he has not a word to say on its behalf. You at least, have not one.

Let, therefore, the emblems of holiness which the Holy Ghost teaches by, suggest to you all that he intends. That, of course, will seem more than you can acquire; but it will enable you to do better than those do who compare themselves only with others. Scriptural figures are not fancies. "It seems to the honour of religion, that so many things can, without the art of forcing resemblances, be accommodated to its illustration. It is an evident and remarkable fact, that there is a certain principle of *correspondence* to religion throughout the economy of the world. He that made all things for himself, appears to have willed that they should be a great system of EMBLEMS, reflecting or shadowing forth that system of principles in

which we are to apprehend Him and our relations and obligations to Him: so that religion, standing up in grand parallel to an infinity of things, receives their testimony and homage, and speaks with a voice which is echoed by creation."—FOSTER. The justness of these profound and splendid remarks is almost self-evident in the emblem of DEW. The history of dew is a figurative history of CONVERSION; and, in its leading features, so strikingly similar, that if dew had been created for no other purpose but to image forth the "new creation," it could hardly be more characteristic.

The design of God in establishing and pointing out the resemblances between natural and spiritual things is obvious. He thus places us so, that, whether we are in the house or the fields, we may have before us "lively oracles" of his great salvation: at home, in the Bible; abroad, in nature. For, as prophet unto prophet, and apostle unto apostle, so "day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night teacheth knowledge,"—there being no voice

of nature which does not echo some voice of Revelation.

Thus, the ORIGIN of dew is an emblem of human society in its *natural* state. The original elements of dew are as various in their character, as the diversified states in which water and moisture exist on the earth. Now they exist in swamps and seas, in marshes and meadows, in stagnant pools and running streams, in fetid plants and fragrant flowers: but wherever water lies or lurks, whether in the chalice of a rose or in the recess of a tank, it must undergo the same change, and pass from fluid to *vapour*, before it becomes dew. As *water*, it cannot, however pure or polluted, ascend into the atmosphere, nor refine itself into dew: it may undergo changes of taste, colour, and smell, according to the channels it lies in and flows on; but into dew it will not turn, until it is exhaled in vapour by the sun.

Now, the moral, like the natural world, has its putrid marshes and its pure streams—its calm lakes and its stormy oceans; for although

no class of mankind is naturally holy, some classes are comparatively pure, and others grossly vile. There are, in society, the decent and the indelicate, the humane and the cruel, the cool and the passionate, the upright and the dishonest. These distinctions between man and man are as visible as those of land and water on the globe, and as real as the difference between spring and pit water. But no natural amiableness of disposition, nor any acquired refinement of character, amounts to "true holiness." The best, in common with the worst, "must be born again" before they can enter into the kingdom of God: for, as water, in its purest state, must be exhaled into vapour before it can be transmuted into dew, so both the moral and the immoral must be regenerated before they can enter heaven. Education may purify the manners, but only faith can purify the heart: love of character may secure external decorum, but only the love of Christ can secure internal holiness. Thus far the resemblance holds good.

Again; the agency by which dew is produced from all the varieties of water, is an emblem of that spiritual agency by which the varieties of human character are transformed into the Divine image. Now, the sun is the grand agent in the natural world, by which portions of all waters are changed into vapour. His heat, operating on their surface, produces exhalations wherever it touches, drawing vapour from the wide expanse of the ocean and from the weedy pool; from the brakish river and from the sweet brook. And the sun is the only luminary of heaven that exhales the waters. The moon regulates their tides, and the stars irradiate their surface; but the united rays of both are insufficient to evaporate ingredients for a single dewdrop. It is the sun which draws from the earth, into the atmosphere, the elements of this beautiful fluid: in like manner, it is "the Sun of Righteousness" alone that draws sinners from the fearful pit of the curse, and from the miry clay of corruption. The attractive influence of his CROSS is to us

what the heat of the sun is to the moisture of the earth—the only drawing power. Other doctrines may, like the moon, produce regular tides of formal worship, and, like the stars, brighten the surface of the character; but they shine too cold to regenerate the heart or purify the conscience. Thus, ARIANISM, although it shone in the brightness of learning and ethics during the last century, had no spiritual attraction: it drew small numbers from the Church to the Meeting; but none from the world to God—as the God of salvation. SOCINIANISM also has, of late, shone in the heat of proselyting zeal; but the only effect is, that some of the young, who formerly cared nothing about religion, are become flippant speculators, and many of the speculators masked Deists. It is notorious that the system has made the young "heady and high-minded," and the old callous. Many of both are, indeed, intelligent and upright; but these were so *before* they embraced the system, and would be what they are under any moral

system, while their local and relative circumstances continue the same. And what have the classically elegant lectures on morals, which sound from so many pulpits, done for the young or old? Except maintaining a routine of formal worship, and raising an ignorant clamour against evangelical truth, they have left parishes and districts as they found them—locked up in the icebergs of apathy and self-delusion. And such must ever be the effects of *legal* preaching, because it is not God's appointment for winning souls. He no more intends to save sinners by the law, than to evaporate the waters by the moon or the stars. The law, like these luminaries, is a light to our feet in "the new and living way;" but only the Sun of Righteousness, shining in the Gospel, can draw us into that way. "The dew of his youth" can only be formed by his own influence. Thus far, also, the parallel is just.

Again; the secret process by which the exhaled vapours are turned into dew, is an emblem of that Divine operation by which the

Holy Spirit makes sinners "new creatures in Christ Jesus." The precise agent in nature, by which vapour is condensed into dew, is not known: whether it is by cold or by electricity, or by both, is still as much a mystery as when God asked Job from the whirlwind, "Who hath begotten the drops of dew?" In like manner, although we know that the Holy Spirit is the agent who changes the heart, by making the Gospel power unto salvation, we are ignorant of the nature of his operations. Whether they are partly physical, or wholly moral, is unknown. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." But we do know what is much *better*—that his sacred influences are inseparably connected with the conscientious use of the means of grace, and forthcoming in answer to serious prayer. This we know; that as water *exposed* to the sun will be evaporated in part, and water *excluded* from the sun will

never become dew; so we may expect Divine influence in the use of divinely appointed means, and can look for none if they are neglected.

Again; the *similarity* of dewdrops in pureness and beauty, although formed from all the varieties of vapour, is a fine emblem of that uniform spirit which characterizes the diversified classes of mankind, who are brought to believe on Christ for salvation. There is what may be called a *family likeness* prevailing throughout the dewdrops of the morning. They differ in size; but they are all transparent, tender, and pure. This is the more remarkable, seeing their original elements were so different: part of the vapour was drawn from the briny deep, and part from the putrid fens; portions of it from the slimy pool, and portions from the steaming surfs. Now, that the exhalations from springs and rivulets, from the herbs of the field and the flowers of the garden, should return to the earth in sweet dews, is not surprising: but that the gross and

tainted vapours should return sweet and pure. is wonderful! And yet all this is realized under the gospel. The sinner drawn from the very dregs of society, and the sinner drawn from a respectable family—the convert from sensuality, and the convert from intellectual pride—the wanderer returning from vice, and the wanderer renouncing vanity—become alike in their leading views, principles, and feelings: they build their hopes on the same foundation, ascribe their escape to the same grace, and aim at the same kind and degree of holiness. "Whosoever" hath the hope of eternal life "in Christ," "purifieth himself," even as Christ is pure. Converts differ, indeed, in the degree of their knowledge, gifts, and graces—as the dewdrops in their size; but, like them, they are all partakers of a new nature, and each compared with what he was before conversion, "a new creature in Christ Jesus."

Again; the refreshing and fertilizing influence of the dew is a fine emblem of the salutary influence of converts in their respective fami-

lies and spheres. The dew cools the sultry air, revives the parched herbage of the earth, and bathes the whole landscape in renovated beauty: and, in like manner, holy families are harmonious—holy churches tranquil. Even an individual convert is not without a portion of sweet influence in his circle; the change in his character and spirit suggests to others the necessity and the *possibility* of being changed too; and thus "they that dwell under his shadow revive as the corn, and grow as the vine." His example distils as dew upon the tender herb, quickening the formal to the power of godliness, and awakening the careless to consideration. Thus the pious are the *salt* of the earth. The absence of dew would not be more fatal to the natural world, than the want of converts to the moral world. Were they withdrawn, or were their succession to cease, even the general morality of society would wither and sink far below its present standard and strength.

Again; the dew is regularly drawn up

again by the sun, when it has refreshed the earth; and is thus a fine emblem of the first resurrection, when all the saints shall ascend to meet the Sun of Righteousness in the air. No scene of nature is more lovely than a summer landscape at sunrise, when every field, grove, and hedge is spangled with morning dew. The drops seem to sparkle with conscious delight at the approach of the sun—climbing, as he ascends, to the top of every leaf, as if impatient to meet him in the air. Every admirer of nature has noticed this scene, and watched the dewy vapour rising like incense from the golden censer of summer. Who has not gazed with rapture on the glowing myriads of dewdrops, when each of them is a miniature of the sun which gilds them? And, when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise on the morning of the resurrection, the heirs of glory will be as numerous and beautiful as the dew from the womb of the morning—all in the beauty of holiness; for they "shall be like Him, when they see him as he is."

No. IV.

A MATRON'S TIMIDITY EXPLAINED.

PERFECT conformity to the Divine image exists only in the Divine presence! Only those who see God face to face, are holy as God is holy. Until we see Him as He actually is, we cannot be fully like him. Nothing but "open vision" can produce an entire moral resemblance between our spirit and the Father of spirits. They little know what perfection means, who imagine that they are "already perfect." Those, however, are quite as ignorant, and more criminal, who are not trying to perfect holiness in the fear of God. They are certainly very *weak* in intellect, who reckon themselves spotless in heart or character: but they are weaker in conscience and in all principle, who are content to be imperfect, or not much concerned to keep

themselves unspotted from the world. And, alas, there are far more of the latter class, than of the former. The *visionaries* of Perfection are but few in numbers, and small in influence: whereas, the *trucklers* to allowed and needless Imperfection, are many and mighty. The name of the Inconsistent is "Legion."

How do we feel, when we say to ourselves, or when it is proved to us from Scripture and Experience, "that perfection is impossible out of Heaven?" Are we glad to hear this? Is it good news to us? We make a very bad use of it, if we employ the fact to excuse our besetting sin, or to exempt us from the trouble of watchfulness and self-denial. It was never revealed by God, nor avowed by His ministers, for this unholy purpose. God declared it, and Prophets and Apostles confessed it, in order that conscious Imperfection might not drive the followers of Holiness to despair. The *talkers* about holiness do not need the fact, although they use it. Their imperfection, as they call it, neither alarms nor humbles them. They are on very

good terms with what is bad in their habits: indeed, quite in love with the sin that most easily besets them. It would be no gratification to them, to be redeemed from its present power. They intend, of course, to give it up some time, and in time enough (as they think) to leave it still pardonable, or not fatal: but, like Augustine, "not now."

Not thus lightly, however, do sins or shortcomings sit upon the conscience, or affect the hopes, of godly women. They have to prove their faith by their works; to confirm their hopes by their holiness; to make their calling and election sure, by a growing likeness to Him, to whose image Believers are "predestinated to be conformed." To them, therefore, it is both a solemn and startling matter, to miss some features of the Divine image in their character; and others in their spirit; and to find all the features of that image so indistinct and unsettled! This discovery causes in them great searchings and sinkings of heart before God. Indeed, something of both continues

with a Christian through life. She is never fully "*satisfied*" with her own piety. Like David, she never can be satisfied with herself, until she awake in heaven in all the beauties of that holiness, which is the express moral image of God.

This is one great characteristic of a real Christian: she never is, and never can be, quite satisfied with the *degree* of her own piety. She may, indeed, be quite satisfied that it is of the right kind, both as to its principles and spirit, so far as it goes: but she never thinks that it has gone far enough. She may have no doubt of its sincerity towards God, nor of its salutary influence over herself and her family, nor of its usefulness in her sphere of action: but still, it comes short of her wishes, and even fills her with shame and sorrow. She is not satisfied with herself, whoever else may approve or applaud her. Indeed, nothing humbles her more than compliments from others. Not that she is indifferent to the good opinion of others: but she feels that if they knew her heart as she

knows it, they would not think so highly of her. For she is conscious of coldness, where they see nothing but warmth; of ignorance, where they recognise wisdom: of earthly-mindedness, where they acknowledge spirituality and heavenly-mindedness. Like Paul, a real Christian woman feels herself "less than the least of all saints," even when she stands highest in public estimation.

Were this fact well understood, as being characteristic of true piety, it would prevent many Christians from *unchristianizing* themselves so often as they do. They imagine, because they are so *dissatisfied* with themselves, that the satisfaction which others express, is more from kindness than wisdom, or rather friendly than prudent. They wish to think themselves as sincere, right, and safe as their friends say; but they are afraid to conclude that they really are so. "Should I not have the witness in *myself*, if I were, indeed, a child of God?" is their answer to many a prayer and appeal which treats them as daughters of the

Lord God Almighty. "Your arguments may be very true in your own case and in that of others," they say; "but you cannot argue me out of my own feelings, nor persuade me against my own consciousness. I am not satisfied with either my faith or my repentance; my prayers or experience: and for this solid reason; —I see so much in my heart that is bad, and so little in my life that really glorifies God, that I can hardly conceive how there could be any grace where there is so much coldness and deadness. "*O wretched that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!*"

This self-dissatisfaction is, however, a very satisfactory proof of real piety, in all cases where a real effort is made to be holy in heart and life. There is no great effort to be so, wherever there is self-satisfaction. Those who, like the Laodiceans, are pleased with themselves, are, like them, an "abomination" unto the Lord. They both thought and said, that they had "need of nothing." They took for granted, that they were enlightened enough,

clothed enough, and enriched enough, to be quite safe, or on the right side for Eternity. But, what did Christ say to them? "Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Thus the men who imagined that they had need of nothing, were found wanting in every thing, when weighed in the balance of the Sanctuary, by the Saviour of the Church.

Here is the awful consequence of calculating how little piety will just suffice for safety at last. The Laodiceans seem to have reckoned to a fraction, how little would do. Their question had evidently been, not how much God required, nor how much they could cultivate, nor what would be the advantage of eminent piety: but just, how much is absolutely needed, in order to any chance of escape at last? And whenever a woman comes to reckon in this way, she is sure to let nothing into her list of duties or graces, which she can keep out. The moment she is so infatuated by sloth or worldliness, as to drive a *bargain* in religion

she will drive a *hard* bargain with it; and thus cheat herself to a certainty, whilst trying to cheat it. This is inevitable, whenever a woman tampers with the question,—where can I stop with safety in the path of holiness? She is sure to stop wherever she dislikes to go, and to make her own convenience limit the meaning of God's requirements.

Now although there may be both some weakness and waywardness in the spirit of those Christians, who give way to doubts and fears, and who "write bitter things" against themselves, whenever they do not feel as they wish, still, their spirit is noble and wise, compared with the spirit of the woman, who cares nothing about how she feels or acts in religion, if she can only keep down the fear of perishing. There is no comparison: it is all *contrast*, between a doubting Christian, and a heedless or heartless professor.

In saying this, however, nothing is farther from my design, than vindicating or even palliating the habit of doubting. It is a bad

habit; although infinitely a better one than the habit of taking for granted that all is right before God, when there is nothing flagrantly wrong before men. Still, it is bad: and in this way. It tempts some who witness it to doubt the power of the Gospel; or the truth of the promises; or the freeness of grace. The doubting Christian herself, does not question these things. All her misgivings of heart arise from what she thinks and feels herself to be: and not from any suspicion of the freeness or power of the grace of God. This distinction is not, however, noticed by all observers. Some look only on the surface of such a case; and, when they see a serious and consistent woman, without comfort, and almost without hope at times, they strongly suspect, either that the Gospel is not such good news as Ministers say, or that prayer is not so surely answered as the Promises seem to imply. Accordingly, when recent converts see cases of this kind, they are tempted to doubt whether they may not pray in vain too, or strive to no purpose. Those,

again, who want an excuse for neglecting prayer, or for remaining undecided, seize upon such cases with avidity, and pretend to be discouraged by them, or warranted from them to doubt whether religion is enjoyment.

Now to both classes I would say, you are equally wrong, in the conclusions you thus draw from the sadness and suspense of weak Believers. They may seem to have no enjoyment in religion, and may even say that they find no comfort: but, ask them to give up religion, for the pleasures of sin; propose to them a return to the world for happiness; offer to them the sweetest cup of earthly enjoyment, in exchange for that cup of salvation, which they hold in their hand without venturing to drink freely of the living water;—will they make the exchange, or even listen with patience to the proposal? No indeed. They will tell you at once, that however unhappy they may feel, they would be miserable, yea, unspeakably wretched, were they to take up with any earthly portion whatever. Not for

ten thousand worlds, would they turn their back upon the Saviour or Holiness.

And, is there no grace in this state of mind? Has prayer been unanswered, where the heart thus prefers to follow Christ even in *darkness*, rather than forsake him for the things of time or sense? Yea, is there not *enjoyment*, or, at least, cause for comfort, in a state of mind which thus prefers the Divine favour and image, to all that the world calls good or great? For, what but grace,—special, saving, sanctifying grace, could have wrought this change in the natural spirit of the mind, which is of the earth, earthy? Did doubting Christians reason in this way on their own case, they could not long doubt the reality of their conversion.

Nor is this the only thing which proves that a saving work of grace has been begun in them, by the Spirit of God. The sad light in which they see themselves, arises from the true light in which they see the *character* of God. Had they seen less of His glory, they would be less ashamed of themselves. It is because

His character is much before their minds, that their own character stands so low in their estimation. Were they only comparing themselves with others, or their present selves with their former selves, they would be more satisfied with themselves: but they are *contrasting* themselves with infinite purity; with perfect excellence; with unchangeable holiness: and this process of judging, just produces the same effect upon them, which it had upon Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles.

Doubting Christians overlook this fact, and in the hurry and flutter of the moment, forget that the most eminent saints of old, had exactly the same opinion of themselves, whenever they had the same clear and solemn views of the glorious majesty of Jehovah. Who said, when his eyes saw the true character of God, "*I abhor myself?*" It was Job. Who said, when he saw the glory of God in the Temple, "*Wo is me, I am undone?*" It was Isaiah. Who fell at the Saviour's feet as dead, when he bowed the heavens over Patmos, and appeared

in his original glory? It was John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. Who said, "So, foolish and ignorant was I: I was as a beast before thee?" when he understood that the prosperity of the wicked was no token of the Divine favour, nor the trials of the righteous any impeachment of the wisdom or the equity of Providence? It was Asaph.

And, were these men not true believers, because thus overwhelmed by a sense of their own vileness and unworthiness? Why; it was their high and holy views of God and the Lamb, that laid them thus low in their own estimation. "No strange thing," therefore, has happened, when even some exemplary Christians are thus troubled, when they think of God. In such cases, He has manifested himself unto them, not only as he does not unto the world, but also differently from the manifestation of his presence to other Christians. I mean, that God brings that view of his own character before the mind of each of his children which is best suited to each of them. Some

could not bear to see much of His glorious majesty; and, therefore, God manifests himself to them, chiefly as a tender Father and a watchful Shepherd. Others again cannot bear indulgence, without presuming upon it, or being betrayed by it into some wrong spirit; and He keeps them low and fearful, that they may be humble and watchful. But there is not less paternal love in the one case than in the other. He is equally training both for Heaven, although each by a different process of fatherly discipline.

You, therefore, if rather cheered on in the path of holiness by the soft light of God's countenance, than kept in check from the broad way by awful views of God, have no occasion to suspect your piety because your spirit is not overwhelmed. And you have as little reason to suspect your conversion, if, at times, almost convulsed by your awful views of God, and of yourself before God. The question is—does the light in which He chiefly manifests himself to you, keep you afraid of sin, jealous of the

world, and conscientious in the duties of life and godliness? That is the best light for you, —which keeps you walking most humbly and circumspectly with God. And whether the light be lovely or solemn, it will keep you *dissatisfied* with yourself, until you awake in the image of God.

Another cause why some Christians are so low in spirits and hope, is, that their sense of the greatness of the great salvation is more than usually vivid. That salvation spreads out before them in such vastness of grace and glory, that they sink into nothing before its august presence. They can hardly imagine that it can be free to them. They see nothing in any of their own feelings towards "so great salvation," at all great enough or good enough to prove that they truly value it. They find it impossible to bring up their love or faith, to a height worthy of its unspeakable worth. Thus they lose sight of its freeness, by looking so often and closely to its grandeur.

But are they unbelievers, because they are

afraid to hope for a salvation which they thus admire and adore? There is, indeed, *unbelief*, in not venturing to hope as freely as they wonder deeply: but it is not the unbelief of indifference, nor of neglect, nor of formality. It is not the unbelief of the natural mind, nor of impenitence. It is humility sliding into hesitation. It is diffidence sliding into timidity.

For, who gave the doubting Christians such lofty and adoring views of the value of the great salvation? Whence came the light which has so revealed and irradiated to them, the heights and depths, the lengths and breadths of the love of Christ, that they feel as if nothing less than *angelic* love to Him could be acceptable love; or as if nothing short of Abraham's faith could be true faith?

I am not advocating nor excusing these doubts and fears: but I am, and I avow it, maintaining that their minds are not in nature's darkness, who thus see the glory of salvation: that their hearts are not in sin's or the world's bondage, who thus revere the great salvation;

that their spirit is not untouched by the Spirit of God, who thus hesitate because they think nothing good enough as a welcome to that salvation.

I have no doubt of their piety or safety; but I do *stand* in doubt of the woman who is *satisfied* with either her faith or love towards so great salvation. It must seem but very little to the woman who sees enough in her own feelings and character to do justice to all its claims. Again, therefore, I affirm, that a real Christian cannot be satisfied with herself, until she awake in the image of God.

Another cause of that dissatisfaction with themselves, which keeps the hopes and hearts of some Christians very low, is, their high and holy estimate of the work and witness of the Holy Spirit. His agency, or influence, means *so much* in their judgment, that they cannot think how any thing they have felt, or are capable of feeling, could amount to being "born again of the Spirit." Indeed, it is only by ascribing and giving credit to others

for more fruits of the Spirit than others possess, that such persons can admit that any change is a *Divine* change. They believe that other Christians are much holier than they *seem;* and thus account for their being happier than themselves.

Now, although there is some mistake in all this, the error is on the safe side. Better rate the work of the Holy Spirit too high than too low. Better hesitate to call any ordinary change Divine, than call every moral improvement regeneration, or every conviction conversion. But there is no occasion for thus going to either extreme. Neither the work nor the witness of the Spirit is a doubtful thing, wherever there is humility before God, and an honest desire to be like God. These are principles which can neither be taught nor learned without the Holy Spirit. They are not natural, and they are never acquired by mere human effort. Indeed, no one tries or wishes to be truly humble before God, until the Spirit of God touch the heart.

Let not, therefore, the timidity, nor even the trembling, the doubts nor the fears, of some "holy women," dishearten you, or draw you into suspicions of the efficacy of the Gospel to console as well as to sanctify. It can do both equally. Its promises have only to be as simply welcomed by your doubting friends, as its precepts are meekly obeyed by them, in order to their being as happy as they are humble. Sheshbazzar would say to each of them "Woman, why weepest thou? Shake the mulberry trees in the valley of Baca; and make it a well; and thus go from strength to strength, until you appear before God in Zion."

The Iom Hacchipurim, the great day of Atonement, was drawing nigh; and, from Dan to Beersheba, the Israelites were preparing to appear before God in Zion. "The songs of Degrees" were reviewed in every family, that they might be repeated and sung

in the wilderness; and every man that was right-hearted said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!"

Amongst those who waited for the "Consolation of Israel," none in Beersheba had appeared in Zion so often as Sheshbazzar. From year to year he had cheered the aged, and charmed the young, on their pilgrimage. His proverbs met all cases, and his smiles or tears suited all hearts. He wept with the weeping, and rejoiced with the joyful. And yet, Sheshbazzar was a man that had seen affliction. The Angel of Death had said twice "Write that man a widower;" and the "desire of his eyes" was taken away at a stroke. The Angel of Death stood on the tomb of his grief, and said again, "Write that man childless;" and it was done. His heart bled, but it never murmured. He said that each loss had become a new link between his heart and heaven; and that now, like the High Priest's

breast-plate, it was so linked, all around, that it could not fall. The young wondered, and the aged blessed the God of Israel, who gave consolation in trouble, "and songs in the night."

His fellow-pilgrims regarded him as almost a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, whilst journeying with him in the wilderness. They resolved to ask him what was the *secret* of his consolation under so many calamities. They asked, and the old man answered with a heavenly smile, "*I shake the mulberry trees.*" It was a dark saying, and they understood him not; but, knowing that he never spake unadvisedly with his lips, they pondered that saying in their hearts.

Sheshbazzar knew that their curiosity was neither idle nor impertinent, and said, "When we come to the valley of Baca, I will explain myself." They came to the valley of Baca, and, behold, it was very dry! The streams in the desert were passed away like the summer brook, and the heavens gave no sign of rain. The pilgrims were panting "as

the heart for the water-brooks," but found none. All eyes were turned to Sheshbazzar. "Shake the mulberry trees," he said. They shook them, and dew, pure and plenteous as "the dew of Hermon," began to pour from every leaf. They made wells around the mulberry trees to prevent the showers from being absorbed in the sand of the desert, and then shook the trees again. They drank; but, though refreshed, they were *not satisfied*. They looked to Sheshbazzar again. His eyes were up unto God. He raised "the song of Degrees" in that "house of their pilgrimage." All joined in it, and sung, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." The pilgrims paused. No cloud appeared on Carmel, and no sound of rain was heard from the wings of the wind. "Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious?" was a question quivering on the parched lips of many. Sheshbazzar alone was utterly unmoved. He raised again the song of Degrees,

and his rich and mellow-toned voice sounded in the wilderness like the jubilee-trumpet amongst the mountains of Jerusalem. The pilgrims listened as if an angel had sung:—"He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. The Lord is thy keeper: The Lord is thy shade upon the right hand. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and for evermore." He paused, and bowed his head, and worshipped. The pilgrims felt their faith in God reviving, and renewed their part of the song: I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. And whilst they sung, "the Lord gave a plenteous rain" to refresh his weary heritage in the wilderness.

When they had drank, and were satisfied, and had blessed the God of their fathers, Sheshbazzar said,—"My children! the PROMISES of God are the mulberry trees in this

valley of tears. The dew of heaven lies all night on their branches, and some dew may always be shaken from them. When I was widowed, like our father Jacob, I shook that unfading mulberry tree, 'The LORD *liveth; and blessed be the rock of my salvation.*' When like David, our king, I was bereaved of my children, I shook that broad-branching mulberry tree, '*I will be unto thee a better portion than sons or daughters.*' Accordingly, I have found no trial, without finding some dew of consolation upon the trees of promise, whenever I shook them. And when more was necessary, God has strengthened me with strength in my soul."

The pilgrims looked at the mulberry trees in the valley of Baca, which they had shaken, and smiled complacently on the good old man. He saw it, and continued his parable :—

"It was not whilst Job pondered and brooded over his calamities, that he said of God, 'Though he slay me, yet will I put my trust in him:' he was shaking the mulberry trees

when he said this; and when he said, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' Abraham would never have yielded Isaac to the altar, if he had not shaken that great mulberry tree—'*In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*'"

Thus the pilgrims went on, "from strength to strength," listening to the wisdom of Sheshbazzar; and "every one of them" appeared "before God in Zion."

It is, perhaps, quite as necessary to explain the implicit faith of some Matrons, as the doubting faith of others.

Amongst many fond and fanciful names, which Sheshbazzar's young friends bestowed upon him, the favourite one, with them, was—the Beershebean Eagle. Agreeably to this title, his grove, upon the hill of vineyards, was called the Eagle's Nest. The emblem was not misapplied; for "as an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings. taketh them, beareth them

on her wings," so Sheshbazzar, guarded and guided his young friends. It was not often, however, that the old man could climb the hill of vineyards to visit the eagle's nest. His favourite seat was under his fig tree. But there—his young friends could not be alone with him. The elders of Beersheba often visited him there, after the evening sacrifice; and some of them had no sympathy with the vivacity of the young. Sheshbazzar's *eaglets* seemed, to them, to require checks rather than encouragements. He himself was often told, that if he did not *clip* their wings, they would soon flee off from the ark of the covenant, and, like Noah's raven, never return. Sheshbazzar was wont to say, in answer to this, "that wings were not made to be clipped: if their flight be well directed, they cannot be too wide, nor too strong. Let us treat the young as Noah did the dove; welcoming them into the ark of our confidence whenever they are weary, and never putting them upon the wing except for sacred purposes: then, like the dove, they

will return 'bringing an olive leaf' to garland our grey hairs."

The elders of Beersheba had not been treated thus in the days of their youth; and, therefore, they did not understand the principles of Sheshbazzar's conduct. "It is one of your *odd* ways," they said, "and whoever lives to see the end of it will find that the old way of checking is the best." He meekly answered, 'We can never check what is evil in the young, unless we cherish what is good in them." Agreeably to this maxim, he requested his young friends to meet him in the grove after the hour of the morning sacrifice.

They came to the eagle's nest, full of the recollections of the former evening, and evidently mortified by them. Sheshbazzar saw this, and began, at once, to characterize his aged friends; that, in the presence of their sterling worth, their slight weaknesses might be forgotten.

"We can appreciate and admire," said ESROM, "the meek patience of *Gether*, and

the warm zeal of *Laish*, and the solemn piety of *Mahlon*, and the cedar-like integrity of *Jasher;* but we can learn nothing from their lips. Their character is eloquent, whilst they remain silent. When they speak, the charm dissolves; for they are all men of *one* idea, or their thoughts have no connexion. How is their character thus superior to their knowledge? You often tell us, that we shall never *act* better than we *know*. Are *they* not exceptions to this rule?"

"Not in the least, Esrom," said Sheshbazzar; "and, when you have more than *one* idea of this subject, you will find that their character is superior, not to their knowledge, but to their talents and tongues. Each of them knows experimentally that the God of his fathers is the God of SALVATION; and that single truth, when vividly and habitually realived, by minds of any order, is quite sufficient to account for any degree of hope or holiness. The minds of the elders are, indeed, comparatively narrow; but they are completely *full*, and

absorbed with the TRUTH OF TRUTHS;—and a SERAPH'S mind cannot be more than full! I should, indeed, prefer to see their thoughts in clusters like the grapes, and in ears like the corn, or at least, *threaded* like the pearls of the Queen of Sheba; but pearls do not grow in strings, and the wine is sweetest when the grapes are picked off from the stalks, and the ear must be broken up before the corn can be made into bread." Thus Sheshbazzar played with the subject, that he might divert the attention of his eaglets from it. But RACHEL was there, and she had been wounded, as well as mortified, by the cold looks and cutting sarcasms of the elders; and as she was now more intent upon excelling in character, than on shining in talent or knowledge, she repeated the question —How do these good men *act* better than they *understand?*

Sheshbazzar, denied again that they did. "They merely act better than they *explain.* They have reasons for their conduct and spirit, although they cannot always '*render a reason*'

in words. Their reasons may be few, but they are not weak. The *form* of them may not be philosophical nor fascinating; but the substance of them is divine. The simple considerations—'This is the will of God,'—'That is for the glory of God,'—'Thus the Patriarchs acted,'—determine the character of the elders, as effectually as the sublimest forms of these facts could sway the master-spirits of the universe, and far more effectually than your poetical reasons influence your faith or practice."

"My children," said the old man, and he became solemn as a dying man, "mistake not my meaning nor motives. I look at you too often not to see it, and love you too well not to tell it—your minds are not yet full nor happy by what you know of the God of your fathers, as the God of salvation. Your hearts are still divided between God and the world. You are afraid to forget or forsake Him, and it is well; but you do not delight to be often *alone* with him in prayer, nor to meditate upon

His character, except when your thoughts assume forms of mystery or majesty. You are rather fascinated by *sublime* ideas of Jehovah, than affected by sweet or solemn ideas. His character attracts you more by the boundless range which it opens to your excursive imagination, than by the solid basis it affords for your eternal hopes. Accordingly, were your best thoughts resolved into their simple elements, they would lose more than one half of their hold upon you. The facts of the great salvation, without its figures, would be held tame by you—so much are you the creatures of fancy. But what are the constellated images with which genius has enshrined, as with another 'cloud of glory,' the ark of the covenant; compared with the simple fact, that our God is the God of salvation? This truth duly apprehended and appreciated, would render the ark of the covenant glorious in your eyes, even if the shechinah were removed from it, or had never rested upon it."

"True, father," said Rachel, blushing as she

spoke; "but the God who gave the covenant of promise, gave the shechinah of glory along with it. He himself has invested and enshrined even the truth of truths with its chief attractions, and thrown around it all the pomp and plentitude of imagery."

"I grant it, my daughter—readily grant it, and cordially rejoice in the '*divers manners*' in which God spoke unto our fathers by the prophets. I feel that I owe much both to the splendid and the mysterious forms in which the great salvation has been revealed. I doubt, from the character of my own mind, whether the covenant if given in simpler forms, would have arrested my wayward attention, so as to win and fix my volatile heart. The majesty of God's language is, however, a part of God's infinite *condescension*. Nor must we forget the character of our nation, when He multiplied and heightened the hallowed enshrinements of the covenant. Noah required no shechinah on Ararat, nor Abraham on Moriah, to endear the covenant to them, or to induce them to set the

bloody seal of sacrifice to it. Both the magnificence and the variety of Mosaic worship are, therefore, the measure of our fathers' minds, when they came out of Egypt and settled in Canaan.

"But I have no wish to evade the force of Rachel's remark. God has as evidently diversified the forms of truth to please the mind, as the flavour of fruits, or the colour of flowers, to gratify the senses. The food of the soul is obviously from the same hand as the food of the body. It is not, however, the rind of the pomegranate, nor the bloom of the grape, nor the golden tinge of the corn, that we prize most. We do prize these lovely hues as proofs of ripeness, but the *nourishment* is in the fruit which they beautify: so it is with revealed truth.

"I have thought too, at times, that there are deeper reasons for the profusion of figurative language in the word of God, than some suspect. For, by thus seizing upon all the sublime and lovely objects in nature, and consecrating

them to the illustration of the Divine character and government, so that they burn as lamps around the eternal throne, God has created a grand antidote against IDOLATRY. The natural objects which are the gods of other nations are thus made the mere *servants* of the true God, or only the shadows of his glory: so that what they worship, we employ as helps in his worship. And, who could bow to the sun shining in his strength, or kiss the hand to the moon walking in her brightness, who had once read, that God is the 'Father of lights, without variableness or the shadow of turning?' ESROM! you can follow out this hint; it is quite in your line of things.

"And, Rachel, the following hint is in your line. There is a strong tendency to extremes in the human mind. Some who love nature with enthusiasm, loathe religion, or conceal their dislike to it under the thin veil of polite and vague compliments. Others love religion with unquestionable cordiality; but, from seeing the votaries of nature averse to the word and

worship of Jehovah, they are afraid of nature, and inclined to frown upon every reference to its beauties or sublimities. They thus seem to think that a star or a flower is as likely as Baal or Ashtaroth, to estrange the human mind from God and godliness. In their estimation, it is heresy to speak well of "the sweet influences of the Pleiades;" and empty sentimentality to be affected by the varied scenery of the heavens or the earth. They confine themselves to scriptural language, and yet forget that it is full of nature! The word of God registers all the works of God, and calls them all forth 'in their season,' to do homage to itself and its subjects; and yet these good people seem unconscious of the fact. Was it not as an antidote against this divorce of nature from religion, that God incorporated with the revelation of eternal things so many appeals to the scenes and seasons of nature? RACHEL, this is in your new line of things. Whilst you were prayerless, you were a mere sentimentalist; and only too willing to find excuses for

the neglect of the Scriptures. You preferred the *works* of God to the *word* of God. This proved how little you read the latter, and how superficially you studied the former. Nothing honours nature so highly as the Bible has done. Moses and the Prophets have looked upon the heavens and the earth with a more poetic eye than the poets of antiquity, or the harpers of our own times."

Thus the Eagle of Beersheba guarded and guided his young.

No. V.

THE MARYS AT THE CROSS.

THERE are no familiar expressions which a Christian understands better, or means more by, than the emphatic words,—"visiting Calvary,"—"going to the Cross,"—"leaning on the Cross,"—"kneeling at the Cross,"—"clinging to the Cross,"—"looking to the Cross." In one or other of these consecrated forms of speech, a Christian embodies all that is best in the spirit of his penitence, and of his faith, and of his devotion. Indeed, when his heart is not at the Cross, his penitence is neither deep nor tender; his faith neither strong nor lively; his devotion neither sweet nor solemn. Whenever he ceases to glory in the Cross, he sinks into coldness or formality. And if he quit the Cross, or lose sight of it,

he loses both hope and heart, until he get back to it again.

Nothing of this experience has, of course, any connexion with the use that was once made of crosses and crucifixes, in religion. When they were most in use, such experience was least known. More hearts, and more of each heart, have been won to Christ crucified by the preaching of the Cross, than by all the visible exhibitions of it which painting ever embodied, or sculpture emblazoned. When crosses were most numerous, real Christians were fewest, and the real Cross least influential. This is only what might be expected. Emblems, by bringing home the crucifixion to the senses, kept the understanding and the heart far off from its great principles, and its true spirit.

But whilst Christian experience itself has had nothing to do with the once popular uses of a visible cross, the language in which that experience speaks, is, in no small degree, both derived and enriched from this old source. The

familiar expressions which once described what the body did at a cross, or with a crucifix, now describes exactly what the soul tries to do when contemplating the Lamb of God, slain for the sin of the world. Not, however, that the scriptural worship of Protestanism is thus an intended or conscious imitation of the bodily service of Popery: no, indeed: such an idea never occurs to the mind, even when it is clasping and clinging to the Cross in thought, just as superstition did to the symbol in action.

We are not, however, indebted to superstition for all our emphatic forms of expressing the exercise of faith or penitence, at the Cross. Superstition itself borrowed the elements of its best language, on this subject, from the word of God. Both the holding up of the crucifix, by the priest, and the looking at it, by the penitent, are literal imitations: the one of setting forth Christ "openly crucified," and the other of believing on Him with the heart. In like manner the postures and gestures of superstition at a cross, are imitations of the real or supposed

conduct of the Marys on Calvary. Their conduct, however, deserves something better than popish imitation, or even than Protestant admiration. It is more complimented than understood. The Marys were, indeed, "the last at the Cross, and the first at the Sepulchre, of Christ;" and felt, no doubt, all that poetry or piety has ascribed to them, on that solemn occasion. They must, however, have felt far more, and in another way, than is usually supposed. For, unless the Virgin Mary be an exception to the others, they had not exactly our views of the death of Christ, to guide their feelings. What we look at as an atoning sacrifice offered to God, they saw chiefly as an atrocious murder perpetrated by man. Whilst we see chiefly, on Calvary, the flashing sword of Divine Justice, and the bursting vials of Divine Anger, they saw only the gleaming of the Roman arms, and the glare of Jewish vengeance. Where we hear chiefly the thunders of the Divine Law, they heard only the ferocious execrations of a frantic mob. Their feel-

ings, whilst witnessing the crucifixion, could not therefore be akin to our feelings whilst contemplating it. Their sorrow, then, deep, and melting, and genuine as it was, was not penitence, nor was their overwhelming depression humility. Their love to Christ was, indeed, at its height, when his own love to them and to the world was highest; but it was not as an *atoning* Saviour they loved him then.

They did, however, love him then and before, as a Saviour: yea, as the only Saviour. It is as much *under* the sober truth to ascribe their love to Christ unto sympathy, friendship, or ordinary gratitude, as it is *beyond* the truth, to ascribe it unto faith in the atoning efficacy or design of his death. Two of the Marys, at least, cannot be supposed to have known or believed more, at the time, than the Apostles did: and they neither understood then what Christ had foretold of his resurrection, nor approved what he had foretold of his death. Accordingly, the women were as hopeless as the men, on the morning of the third day, until the Angels told

them of his resurrection : for it was not to welcome a living Saviour, but to complete the entombment of the dead Saviour, that they went so early and eagerly to the sepulchre. The "sweet spices" they brought to "anoint Him," prove that they had no hope of finding him alive then. Mark xvi. 1. They were not, however, without faith in Him, as the Saviour, even then. Mary of Magdala continued to speak of Him as her "LORD," even when she supposed that his body had been removed from the sepulchre, and laid somewhere else. John xx. 13. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him," was her first answer to the Angels, when they said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" I would not graft too much meaning upon the word "Lord" itself, in this instance ; nor upon her use of it at the time. I will suppose nothing more, than that she used it then just in the sense she had been accustomed to attach to it, whilst the Saviour was alive : and there is no reason whatever, to think that His death had

altered her opinion of either his Messiahship or his Sonship. It had, no doubt, blasted all her hope of seeing Him establish that temporal kingdom on earth, which all the disciples expected: but it withered none of the hopes of pardon and eternal life, which she had formerly planted upon the power and promises of the Son of God.

This is the real point to be kept in view, whilst judging of the motives and emotions of the Marys at the Cross. They did not understand that the Lamb of God was then taking away the sin of the world, or laying down his life as a ransom for them; but they had no doubt, even then, of his being the Lamb of God, nor of his being their Saviour. All their conduct on Calvary, and especially the honourable and costly funeral they prepared for Christ, prove, to a demonstration, that their "hope in Christ" had not died with him. It does not seem to have dimmed at all, even when the sun became darkness; nor to have shaken at all, even when the earth shook and trembled; nor to have

drooped at all, even when the sepulchre was sealed. Their hope of salvation was then as much with him "in Paradise," as the spirit of the penitent thief was there with him.

The truth of these strong assertions lies on the very surface of the narrative; and applies equally to Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Indeed, there is no evidence, direct or indirect, that the death of Christ overthrew the spiritual hopes, or altered the spiritual opinions, of any of the disciples. It upset all their hope of a temporal kingdom, or of what they called, "redeeming Israel;" but it does not seem to have brought the shadow of either a doubt or a suspicion upon their minds, in regard to his Divine character or mission. They all forsook Him, indeed, at the crisis of his fate; but not from unbelief, but from fear and consternation. The sheep scattered when the Good Shepherd was smitten; but they did so lest they themselves should be smitten with him; and not because they had ceased to consider him as the Shepherd and Bishop of their

souls. The idea of imposture, or fraud of any kind, on His part, never seems to have crossed their minds, even when appearances were most against his claims. John obeyed that dying injunction of Christ, "Behold thy mother!" as promptly and cordially as ever he obeyed any command given by Christ, when in the plenitude of his power and glory. "From that hour that disciple took her into his own house." John xix. 27. In like manner, the very "sadness" of the two disciples, on the way to Emmaus, proves, beyond all doubt, that their opinion of their Lord's integrity had undergone no change by his death. Their spirit would have been bitter or indignant, not sad only, if they had thought him a deceiver. Besides, they did not hesitate nor faulter to say of Him, even then, that he was both "JESUS of Nazareth," and "a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people."

The conduct of the Marys is, however, still more decisive. They never would have followed Christ with tears to Calvary, nor stood

either nigh to or afar off from the Cross, if they had changed their opinion of his truth or of his grace. They did not, indeed, recognise Him as then sealing the everlasting covenant with his blood; but they evidently saw Him sealing the truth of both his gracious promises and his high pretensions by his blood; for it was (and they knew it) because he would not retract nor qualify his high claims, that he was condemned and crucified. Accordingly, at his burial, they acted a part, throughout, in perfect harmony with strong and unaltered faith in both his truth and grace. For, who does not see at a glance, that the Marys neither would nor could have lavished their attentions and tenderness upon His funeral, if they had doubted his faithfulness or his sincerity? Besides, Mary of Magdala had a living proof, in her own bosom, of His Divine power. He had "cast out seven devils" from her spirit: and, as they did not return when he was imprisoned, nor whilst he hung on the cross, nor even when he died, she could not but be sure

that his death had neither disproved his power, nor discredited his character.

I bring out these facts with some care, because they enable us to make a right use of the example of these holy women: for, they are thus, perfect models of faith in the truth of the Saviour's promises, and of love to the Saviour's character. That faith and love they cherished, avowed, and exemplified, when all the aspects of the universe seemed to frown upon, and to fight against, His person and mission. Neither the cowardly flight of his friends, nor the reckless fury of His enemies, moved the Marys. They "stood by the cross," when the cross itself could hardly stand on the quaking mount. They forsook him not, even when they heard him declare that God had "forsaken" him!

They did not, of course, understand, at the time, the mystery of that judicial "LAMA SABACHTHANI;" but neither its mystery, nor its terrors, alienated their affection or their confidence from the Saviour. "None of these things moved" them! Shall, then, *less* things

move you from the Cross of Christ? This is the point I wanted to bring you to. Now, if the Marys did and endured so well, whilst the death of Christ was before them only as a murder and a martyrdom,—what a height both their faith and love would have risen to, had they known, as you know, that it was an atoning Sacrifice, securing "eternal inheritance" to all in heaven, who had died in the faith of Christ; and "eternal redemption" to all on earth, who should then or afterwards believe on him! Oh, had they seen then, as you see now, how all the curse of the Law was cancelled by His bearing its curse; how all the perfections of Jehovah were satisfied and glorified in the highest, by His voluntary submission to their will; how all the balance and basis of the Divine government were established for ever, by His one offering of himself as the votary of their holiness, and as the victim of their justice;—had the Marys been aware of all this, whilst they stood by the Cross, their conduct and spi-

rit, noble as these were, would have been nobler still! Surely, then, your conduct and spirit should not, need not, be inferior to theirs; seeing your knowledge of the glory of the Cross is so much superior to any and all that they possessed, when they thus rose above the fear of peril and reproach, and balanced all the mysteries of the crucifixion by faith in the character of the CRUCIFIED ONE.

There is, indeed, mystery about the Cross still. And, why should there not? I will not answer this question by reminding you, that there is mystery in every thing great and small, mental and material, throughout the universe. But, whilst this fact should teach us to expect it in the Cross too, our own character and spirit may well suggest to us, that our "faith and patience" require some "trial," in common with others.

The Marys were not exempted: and why should we be so? They had to believe and obey, when there was more mystery and less

majesty around the Cross, than now invest it: for now the crown of thorns, and the mock robe and reed of supremacy, are exchanged for the real crown and sceptre of universal government; the scornful "Hail, King of the Jews," is followed by the vying and everlasting "Hallelujahs" of all the armies of heaven: the central cross on Calvary is succeeded by the "middle seat on the eternal throne:" the momentary frown of judicial anger, has given place for ever to the endless and unalterable complacency of paternal love: the keys of death and the invisible world hang upon the "vesture dipped in blood," and He who was "numbered with transgressors," is now identified with Deity, in all the homage and glory which saints or angels can render. If, therefore, the miracles which the Marys saw, and the voices from heaven which they heard, proved to them the Divinity of Christ, and counterbalanced all the wants and woes of His earthly lot; surely His place on the throne and in the worship of Heaven, may well over-

power every difficulty which reason meets, or speculation suspects, in the Divinity and glory of the Saviour.

I neither profess to solve the mystery of His incarnation and sacrifice, nor pretend to be unaffected by it; but I do claim the right to be heard and heeded when I say to you, that an atoning Saviour is the universal creed of Heaven, and the only creed on earth which converts sinners, or consoles saints.

Happily, only a few females, amongst the increasing thousands and tens of thousands of the intellectual, have had the fool-hardiness to stand forward in open hostility to the Godhead of the Saviour. This pitiable *contrast* to all the pure spirits around the eternal throne—this monstrous *singularity*, in a universe which adores the Lamb,—is not presented by many of your sex. Long may it be proverbially true of the sex at large, that they are still the last to quit the Cross, and the first to visit the Sepulchre.

You have, perhaps, some reproach to en-

counter, in thus imitating the Marys. Well; brave and bear it as they did. Had they not dared all hazards, how many souls might have been lost, whom their noble example has won to Christ? Had they shrunk back from owning Him, after having received so much grace from him, how many traitors and cowards might have sprung from their timidity? And should you flee or flinch from the Cross, in order to escape "the reproach" of it, you will peril more souls than your own.

It is, indeed, a trying dilemma when a wife or a daughter cannot "confess Christ" in their family, without giving offence. It is a very strong temptation to be silent, or to compromise evangelical truth, when the avowal of that truth breaks the peace and harmony of home. Firmness is, however, kindness to the opposers. There is no such cruelty to an unbelieving partner, parent, or brother, as breaking faith with Christ, in order to keep the peace with them. For, what is this peace, whilst you must carry about with you the horrible

consciousness that they must perish by their unbelief, and that you are abetting that unbelief! I invoke, adjure, you to consider this! For, could you so conceal your faith from them, as to satisfy them without periling your own soul, you would but more effectually peril their souls.

Look again at the Marys, and be firm. Depend upon it, if you have to witness for Christ at home, your firmness will eventually win souls at home, as well as save yourself. Let "AZUR and ZALMON" suggest to you, how you may join fidelity with tenderness, in dealing with "the enemies of the cross of Christ."

AZUR and ZALMON were "Hebrews of the Hebrews," and had been Pharisees of the Pharisees; but both had renounced Judaism for Christianity, although from different principles. Zalmon was won by the EXAMPLE of Christ: Azur by the ATONEMENT of Christ. Zalmon was fond of the Oriental and Grecian philosophers who speculated on Christianity; Azur refused to associate with them, and would

not acknowledge them as believers. He loved Zalmon as the friend of his youth, but treated his pretensions to be a Christian as unfounded; for they had been advanced in this form and spirit:

"I can no longer resist the evidences of Christianity," said Zalmon: "like the autumnal floods of Jordan, they bear unto the DEAD Sea every objection, as it comes within the mighty sweep of their swellings. The all-perfect character of Jesus demonstrates his Messiahship: it was so pure, and yet so social withal; so unbending in principle, and yet so bland in manners withal; so tried by calamity, and yet so patient withal. Although he was dragged from the cradle to the cross, as it were, on the hurdle of poverty, by the wild horses of slander and persecution, neither agony nor ignominy could alienate him from his *mission*, nor alter his character. Like light, he passed through every medium uncontaminated. Not to be a Christian, therefore, is irrational."

"If you mean by his *mission*, his MEDIA-

TION," said Azur, "I congratulate you upon your conversion: and, whatever you mean, Zalmon, I hail your triumph over the prejudices which blind our nation to the beauty of the Saviour's holiness. But in your philosophical circle, it is become fashionable to reduce his death to the rank of a *martyrdom* for truth, and to exalt his example on the ruins of his Cross. I may not own this as Christianity: I stand in doubt of you."

"I suspected, Azur, that you would," said Zalmon; you live amongst little minds; I move amongst the sages of the city. You are smitten with the love of *mystery*; I am, with the love of VIRTUE. It is enough for me to find in Christ, the Sun of Moral Righteousness: in that capacity he will hold an eternal meridian, and shine with healing in his wings, until righteousness become universal. Such an example the world wanted; and, having found it in Christ, wants nothing more for salvation. Here my faith *begins* and *ends*."

"Zalmon! be serious: thus the faith of

NICODEMUS began. He acknowledged Christ to be a *Teacher* sent from God; and Christ treated the avowal as unworthy of his notice. He did not welcome the *meagre* compliment, but proceeded to teach the 'Master in Israel,' that the SON of God was sent into the world to be lifted up on the Cross, as a sacrifice for *sin*. Remember this fact; and 'marvel not that I say unto you, Ye must be born again.'"

"My early and tried friend, I will be serious. I have marked, AZUR, the fact you mention, and feel staggered by its bearings. It is to the point. And, as a Hebrew of the Hebrews, I cannot forget that, under the law, the pardon of sin was *inseparable* from sacrifice. The principle of ATONEMENT was as prominent in our once holy system, as the Temple in our holy city. All this I frankly concede to be fact; but pretend not to understand it. My present opinion is, that the perfect EXAMPLE of Christ, and his illumination of IMMORTALITY, by raising the standard of morals, render sacrifice unnecessary."

"Zalmon! Zalmon! sacrifices are, indeed, unnecessary now; but on your *new* principles, they were always *useless* and unmeaning. 'The blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sin,' nor open the gates of Paradise to the spirits of our fathers. Think me not harsh, because I am warm. You have forsaken Judaism without embracing Christianity. Neither Christ nor Moses would now own you as his disciple. You occupy a place against which Sinai and Calvary equally roll their thunders. Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? Let them flatter you who love you not: I love you, and therefore warn you. And now, having done so, I will *reason* with you. Was not the Messiah promised to the Fathers? And did not the *faithful* of all ages 'REJOICE' to see his day, even afar off? But, if he came only to *teach* and *exemplify* VIRTUE, what *benefit* could *they* derive from his work? They *expected* benefit from his mission, and died in the faith of reaping its blessings; but if these consist in his

EXAMPLE, they rejoiced without cause; for all the influence of an example, however good, extends only *forward*, not *backward*. *On your principles, therefore, the Fathers had neither part nor lot in the mission of Christ.*"

"True, Azur: but if the Fathers *needed* neither part nor lot in it, what follows?"

"If they did not! Zalmon, are you or they the best *judge* of their need? If their guilt, and their sense of it, be judged from the *number* of their sin-offerings, their need of salvation was absolute. Besides, they looked beyond the sacrifices to the atonement typfied by them; and thus avowed their need of a Divine propitiation. In a word, they expected the Lamb of God to take away their sin by the sacrifice of himself."

"PROVE that, Azur, and I will vie with you in glorying only in the Cross. But the Fathers were in Paradise *before* the Lamb was slain. Their spirits were carried by angels into Abraham's bosom as they departed. They were, therefore, saved *without* the atonement."

"No, Zalmon; they were saved *before* it, but not without it. What saith the Scriptures? 'God hath set forth (Christ Jesus) to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are PAST, through the forbearance of God.' Here, *past sins* refer not only to the former sins of *living* believers, but also to the sins of all believers under the first covenant: for the death of Christ declares the righteousness of God in forbearing and forgiving them. The faithful of former ages were, therefore, justified and glorified, in virtue of Christ's pledge to die for them at the fulness of time. On that ground they were admitted into heaven when they died; but their 'eternal inheritance' was not *confirmed* until his 'death for the redemption of the transgressions under the first testament.' Thus the Atonement had a *retrospective* influence of the *same kind* as its present and prospective influence. And, that the Fathers expected this, yea, calculated upon it, is self-evident from all the prophets. They

taught the Church to *realise* the sufferings of Christ at the sacrifice for her sins; and to speak as if the Lamb had *been* 'slain from the foundation of the world.' 'He *was* wounded for our transgressions, he *was* bruised for our iniquities: surely he *hath* borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.' Thus they both felt their need of an atonement, and knew that it would be made for them. It has been made; and since that moment, the Old Testament saints have 'sung a NEW Song' in heaven, saying with a loud voice—'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain for us.'"

"AZUR, if your views of the sacrifices be right, your system is as harmonious as it is sublime. My scheme, I must confess, does not agree with the *whole* word of God. The *sacrifices*, especially, are not duly explained by it."

"Explained by it, Zalmon! they are utterly *useless* in it. And yet that they were of Divine appointment, is self-evident; for neither reason nor superstition could have suggested them.

And then, no act of worship was ever so signally honoured with the Divine approbation as sacrifice. 'The *cloud of glory*' travelled from altar to altar, like the sun through the signs of the Zodiac, irradiating and ratifying them all. But, on your principles, the high solemnities of sacrificature, which thus charmed and chained down the Sheckinah to the earth, were neither useful nor instructive! 'To the Law and the Testimony,' Zalmon; and since your philosophers 'speak not according to these,' depend on it, 'there is no *light* in them,' Patriarchism, Judaism, and Christianity, unite in confirming the Divine maxim, that 'without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.' There is, therefore, nothing between us and hell, but the BLOOD OF THE LAMB."

"If such be the fact, Azur, God be merciful to me a sinner! And 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ.'"

"AMEN, Zalmon, and Amen! You will now visit Calvary, as the Marys did after the Resurrection. They neither saw its glories,

nor understood its solemnities, on the day of the Crucifixion. I often think with what different feelings they stood at the Cross, when they knew it to be the ALTAR of Eternal Redemption! Then, how all they had seen and heard on the great day of atonement would rise upon them in forms of supernal majesty and supreme glory! Yes; and I find, like them, that my first visit was not my best. I feel ashamed of my first appreciations of the Sacrifice of Christ; they were so vague. And still I have much to learn!"

No. VI.

THE MARYS AT THE SEPULCHRE.

PAUL, when enumerating the successive manifestations of Christ to the disciples, by which "many infallible proofs" of the truth of the Resurrection were given, adds with great emphasis, "Last of all, he was seen of me." If Mary of Magdala lived long enough to hear or read this exclamation, how naturally and emphatically she must have exclaimed, "*First of all, He was seen of me.*" It is not improbable that both she and the other female witnesses of the Resurrection, did live to read or hear St. Paul's personal testimony to this great truth. How, then, do you think, did they approve of being left out of the list of witnesses by Paul; seeing they were the first persons to whom the Saviour "showed himself

alive?" The four Evangelists had not treated them thus, in their Gospels. In each of the Gospels, the Marys are placed at the head of the "great cloud of witnesses," which attest the Resurrection. Why, then, are they not so in the Epistles also? Obviously, because it would have been no kindness to the Marys, whatever honour it might have been to them: for, as Paul's Epistles were chiefly addressed to Gentile Churches, and as persecution raged in Judea at the time, any reference to the Marys, or to the women of Galilee, as the first witnesses, might have drawn more visiters around them than they could conveniently, or wisely, or safely welcome. Thus both their character and their life might have been periled, had their names been made as public and imperishable in the Epistles, as they were in the Gospels. Paul's silence was, therefore, the shield of their holy reputation, and of their precarious life. Both these were hazarded quite enough, by the publicity and popularity which their names had acquired in Judea.

Besides, you can easily conceive, from their character and spirit, how they would count it honour enough, for them, to have seen the Lord "first," even if there had been no notice taken of the fact by the Evangelists. The sweet consciousness, that His first appearance was to them; that His first "All hail" of welcome was to them; that His first smile, after the sorrows of death, beamed on them; and that His first words, after the silence of the grave, were addressed to them: this, all this, must have been joy unspeakable and inexhaustible. The Marys could no more forget it, or be unsatisfied with it, than the Angels who rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and wrapped up the linen clothes within, can cease to remember or to enjoy the high honour bestowed on them, when thus permitted to minister to Christ, as He rose from the dead. Such honour had not all the angels of God then. They were all allowed to worship the Son alike, when God brought "in the First-Begotten into the world:" but when He "brought Him again from the dead,

by the blood of the everlasting covenant," only "two Angels" were admitted to witness, or worship, or serve, on that august occasion.

It would be an equally useless and fruitless inquiry, to ask why this honour was confined to so few of the angels, or why it was conferred upon these two: it is not, however, useless to inquire why the Saviour shewed himself first to the Marys, when he arose from the dead. This was a marked preference, and, therefore, it must have had practical reasons, whether we can discover them all or not.

The great general reason for this preference is to be found in the condition of the SEX at large, at the time. They had, then, neither that place in the Church, nor that rank in society, which they now enjoy. Male and female were not "one," in Moses, as they are now "all one in Christ Jesus:" for, although women were not exactly without a name or a place in the Jewish Church, they had not equal privileges with men. They were not, indeed, "outer court" worshippers at the Temple.

Their place in the sacred area was both higher and nearer to the symbols of the Divine Presence in the Sanctuary, than "the court of the Gentiles:" still, it was fifteen steps lower than the inner court," where the temple and the altar stood, and where all the males appeared before God in Zion. Thus, although they were not kept so "far off" as the Gentiles, from the sight and hearing of public worship, they were not permitted literally to draw "so nigh unto God" as their Fathers, Husbands, or even their brothers did. Indeed, in the time of Christ, they were treated at the Temple very much as Jewish women are now in the Synagogue: placed where they could hardly see or be seen.

This arbitrary and degrading arrangement was not, however, of Divine appointment. This invidious distinction did not exist in the time of Solomon, nor even so early as the reign of Manasseh. Then there were only two courts: "the court of the priest," and "the great court." The place called "the court of the women," in the second Temple of Jerusa-

lem, was no more "according to the pattern shown on the mount," than are the latticed galleries of the great Synagogue of London. Judaism, as God gave it to Moses, did not, indeed, place women altogether upon an equality with men, even "in things appertaining to God;" but still, it did not degrade them exactly, deeply as it subordinated them.

It was in reference, therefore, to a twofold subordination of the sex, that the Saviour had to take effectual measures for making male and female "all one in Himself." He had to do something for women, which should at once emancipate them from human impositions, and equalize them in Divine privileges. And what so effectual for this twofold purpose, as showing "Himself alive after his Passion," to women first? He thus made the Marys apostles, even to the Apostles themselves! After this crowning distinction, what Minister or Church of Christ, could doubt whether "daughters of the Lord God Almighty," were not joint-heirs with His sons, in all the spi-

ritual heritage of Christianity? Thus the Saviour's treatment of the Marys had a reason beyond themselves. He treated them as the representatives of their sex: none of whom appear to have been amongst his public enemies either during his life or at his crucifixion. This is a *remarkable* fact. Even Pilate's wife warned her husband on the judgment-seat, to have nothing to do against "that just person," as she called Christ. In like manner, the multitude of women who followed the Saviour from the city to Calvary, instead of joining with the men in the cry of "Crucify him," "bewailed and lamented him." Indeed, there is no instance of any female offering any public indignity to Christ, whilst he was upon earth. What the private feelings of the Mothers and Daughters of Jerusalem were towards Him, I do not know, of course: but, judging from the kind notice He took of their kindly sympathy, when he was led forth amidst the clamour and execrations of the Jews to be crucified, I am certainly inclined to regard his conduct to the

Marys as an acknowledgment of that sympathy, and thus as a token of special goodwill to their sex, as well as to themselves. Luke xxiii. 27, 31. It was also emphatically "good will to man!" But for this signal honour, women would have been kept down both in the church and society; and that subordination would have weakened the Church, and hindered the progress of all the best charms and charities of social life.

He is but a superficial observer, who sees in the superior education of females now, or in the advanced civilization of men, enough to account for the high and hallowed influence of Christian wives, mothers, and daughters, upon the morals and religion of the age. Both these causes of improvement are themselves the *effect* of Christ's bringing male and female equally nigh unto God by the blood of the cross, and of making them all one in himself: and the proof—the demonstration—the seal of this, was given in His appearing to women first. His "ALL HAIL," to the Marys, began and led

to all the holy consideration in which the sex are now held, and all the holy influence which they now exercise. The impulse which originated both was given in the Arimathean garden. That garden was the Eden in which woman was made again a spiritual "help-meet" for man: the Paradise in which the Adams and Eves of the new creation were made "heirs together" of the grace of Eternal Life. Yes; out of this fact, however much overlooked or forgotten now, arose all the spiritual fellowship, and united co-operation for good, which has either blessed or beautified the world and the Church since.

Men, Fathers, and Brethren!—ye would not have raised "the daughters of the Lord God Almighty to sit together with you in heavenly places with Christ Jesus," had not Christ Jesus himself handed them up, and placed them at your very side in all the ordinances and immunities of the Church. Ye are not, indeed, displeased with this equality, now that it is established. Ye would not alter nor

disturb it now, on any account. Ye are even delighted with it. Ye would not, however, have felt thus, nor would this equality have taken place, had not Christ, by his first act when he rose from the dead, given a deathless distinction to women. The husbands and fathers of that age had not all the honourable feelings of this age. They were not without "natural affection;" but their religious prejudices checked its current. Even when conjugal and parental love was tenderest, it did not admit the idea of spiritual equality in the Church on earth, nor the sweet hope of perfect equality in heaven. It was Christianity that introduced the present habit of thinking and feeling: and it was the example of Christ, ratified by the first "All hail" of the resurrection, that gave effect to the claims which Christianity advanced on behalf of women.

All this may seem only a curious speculation to some men; but to this all men owe whatever was influential in the piety of their mothers. Yes, young Man! your mother could

not have had all her sweet influence over you, even in early life, had she not held, in public opinion, as near and dear a place to the heart of God and the Lamb, as your father did, if he also was pious. It was her equality in the Kingdom of God in both worlds, that made her maternal love as powerful as paternal law. Thus had she stood lower than her husband on the scale of spiritual and eternal privileges, you would not have risen very high on the scale of moral superiority, nor sunk so seldom as you have done.

O, what does not the Church of Christ owe to pious Mothers! When I consider how little the generality of even godly fathers do, in order to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, I cannot but see that the breast of the Saviour was first full, and first warm, after death, with the mighty —the gracious—the wise purpose of creating for mothers paramount motives, and opportunities, and influences for making the lambs of their family the sheep of His fold. He fore-

saw how much would depend on maternal influence, and how much fathers would both leave to it, and throw upon it; and, therefore, His first act when he rose from the dead, as the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, was to put honour upon his female disciples. Mothers! you are sure now that it is no strain of compliment to the sex, which has run through this chapter. You see now that I have not been expanding an incident into a system. I have, indeed, brought forward your rights and privileges from a point in the history of Christ, at which they are not usually exhibited or pleaded: but I have done this because it is the true point, and the public act towards women, by which He gave triumphant effect in the Church to all the claims of his female disciples. Whilst, therefore, I congratulate you upon your equal, and equally well chartered, privileges in the Christian Church on earth and in heaven, I remind you that you are thus blessed, that ye may be blessings; that your responsibility is equal to your high calling in

Christ Jesus, and to your joint-heirship in his kingdom and glory.

I have not forgotten, whilst explaining the grand general reason of the honour conferred on the Marys, that their own character and spirit furnish explanations of the preference thus shown to them. The well known fact, that they were the last at the Cross, and the first at the Sepulchre, ought never to be forgotten. It is not, however, the only fact which seems to have influenced the Saviour's conduct towards them. They had both sat at his feet, and followed him in the regeneration of life, long and often, before his passion began. From the time they were called by his grace, until all his temporal wants ceased, they had "ministered unto him of their substance," and been his prompt and willing servants. During his ministry, they were at once his aptest scholars, and his firmest adherents. In a word, we never hear of them taking any offence at his doctrine, or giving way to either the fiery or ambitious spirit which,

occasionally, betrayed the Apostles. This uniform fidelity and consistency were not likely to be overlooked by the Saviour, when he rose from the dead. He who accepted, and even rewarded openly, the dying testimony which the penitent thief bore to His innocence, was sure to honour those holy women, who had so long and so closely identified themselves with His cause and character. And He did. Whilst He only returned sympathy for sympathy to the "daughters of Jerusalem," who only began to weep when His woes began, he manifested himself to the Marys in the garden, the moment he parted from the angels in the Sepulchre. They were the first admitted to worship at His feet, and enjoy His presence, after the Angels had finished their homage and services.

Is there no practical lesson taught by this historical fact? Does it illustrate no experimental fact? ORIGIN says "God hates the man who thinks, that any of his holidays lasts but one day." He means, that the man who

thinks of the Crucifixion only on Good Friday, or of the Resurrection only on Easter-Sunday, can neither please God, nor profit himself, by his devotions. You readily admit this to be true. Well, it is equally true, that they have not much of the presence of Christ in public ordinances, and are never sure of enjoyment even at the Sacrament, who try not to walk with God during the week, as well as to wait on Him upon the Sabbath. When ever there is heartless prayer in the close from day to day, there will be no heart-felt praise in the sanctuary; because no such communications of grace, nor any such hold of the Cross, as will tune the heart to the joy of penitential grief, or to the joy of a good hope of Salvation. Only Marys who follow Christ through the week, are sure to meet with Christ on the Sabbath. His salutation, "All Hail," is now awarded most frequently to those who serve him most faithfully.

It is also in fine and full harmony with all just views of both Christ and Religion, to

reckon that He was much influenced in his treatment of the Marys, by their sacred regard to the Sanctity of the Sabbath, and by their rising so early to visit his sepulchre. During His life, he had set them an example both of keeping "The holy of the Lord honourable," and of early rising. It was "His custom" to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and to go "early in the morning" to the temple. This the Marys knew, and imitated. Not all their sorrow or desolation, arising from His death and burial, was allowed by them to set aside their Sabbatic duties. They returned from His grave, "and rested on the Sabbath day, according to the commandment." That commandment made no provision nor gave any warrant, for finishing the funeral obsequies even of Christ, although he was "the Lord of the Sabbath:" and the Marys did not venture to take a liberty which the law did not allow. This was not Jewish strictness. They only did right. Nothing but works of necessity or of mercy are lawful on the Sab-

bath day: and the completion of the Saviour's funeral was neither. It was no work of necessity: for even if His sacred body could have "seen corruption," there was more than enough of embalming spices around it to prevent all danger. It was not a work of mercy: for that body could no longer suffer, and was exposed to no insult.

How this example should influence your Sabbatic habits and spirit! For, if the Marys would not finish the rites of Sepulture on the day of holy rest, even in the case of the Saviour, what likeness to them do those women bear, who can finish a *dress*, or pay a *visit*, or take a *jaunt* of pleasure, on that sacred day?

No. VII.

PARTIALITIES IN HOLINESS.

"I HAVE heard and read a great deal (said one) about the nature and necessity of evangelical holiness, and about the only way of acquiring it; but, except in my Bible, I have met with nothing expressly on 'THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.' There, however, almost as much is said about its beauty and loveliness, as upon its necessity. Holiness is as much commended as it is enforced, in the Word of God; and invariably represented, as being equally desirable and essential. Now, although I certainly do not see clearly what could be said on the beauty of holiness, that would help me to follow holiness more fully and willingly, I do both see and feel, that something more than even a deep sense of its *necessity*, is re-

quisite in order to this. I find that it is only in as far as I really love or admire true holiness, that I follow it cheerfully. A sense of duty, or an apprehension of danger, leads me, certainly, farther in well-doing, than love would always carry me: but still, I do those things most and best, which I love as well as revere. Alas, I do nothing as it ought to be done! There is, however, a *better* and a *worse* in my obedience; and the best parts of it are those duties which commend themselves to my heart by their loveliness, as well as to my conscience by their authority. I want, therefore, to see all duty in this light; that I may choose it for its own sake, as well as submit to it because it cannot be safely neglected."

Perhaps, you have thought and felt thus, when observing how much more pleasure you take in some duties than in others. You must have noticed, at times, the very great difference there is between the spirit in which you discharge the duties you really love, and the spirit in which you yield to those you are only

afraid to neglect. In general you are "*glad*" when it is said to you, "let us go up to the house of the Lord:" but not always glad when both Conscience and the Holy Spirit join in saying, "enter thy closet, and shut thy door and pray to the Father who seeth in secret." Even the assurance, "He shall reward thee openly," does not always charm you into your closet, even when you cannot exactly plead the want of time to go. In like manner, you can in general say from the heart, "How *amiable*, are thy Tabernacles, O Lord God of hosts." The house of God presents itself often to your mind, in the course of the week, as the very gate of Heaven. Its oracles and ordinances, its worship and fellowship, with their sweet influences and holy associations, rise up before you in the world, as they did before David in the wilderness, in a vision so bright and lovely, that you feel something of his holy impatience to "appear before God in Zion." Thus you do not say nor think of the Sabbath, —"What a weariness it is! when will it be

over?" You do not, in general, feel like Doeg in the temple, "detained before the Lord." But not so often in this fine spirit, do you anticipate or improve your return to the closet and the family altar. And yet, you love them more and better than some other duties. They also present themselves frequently, as gates of Heaven too. On a bright morning, when the sun fills the house, as with the glory of the old Sheckinah, how exhilarating it is to bow around the family altar, offering "the morning sacrifice?" And on a stormy night, or when wearisome nights are before us, how soothing it is to join in "the evening sacrifice;" casting all our care upon Him who careth for us? And not less exhilarating to our spirit, is the closet of secret prayer, when our thirst for communion with God is ardent; nor less soothing, when our cares and fears are oppressive. Thus there is attraction, as well as obligation, in the duty of prayer. If the law of devotion drive us occasionally to both the domestic and the solitary altar, the cords of

love, or the magnets of conscious want and weakness, draw us habitually. We need law: but we see beauty, and taste happiness, and sometimes lose the sense of duty in the sensations of delight, whilst drawing nigh unto God. Nothing, perhaps, is more gratifying to us, than the prevalence of a truly devotional spirit in the sanctuary and the closet. We welcome it as a token for good, and reckon it an unequivocal mark of grace. Whilst we delight in prayer, we cease to doubt the genuineness of our faith, and are not tempted to question the reality of our conversion.

Now all this is as it should be. We cannot attach too much importance to a devotional spirit, nor be too watchful to preserve it: for when this evidence of personal piety declines, every other passes under an eclipse, which so darkens them all, that we are unable or afraid to trace our connexion with the Sun of Righteousness. We actually lose His light, when we lose our relish for prayer. That relish is, however, more frequently lost or impaired by

not cultivating an equal relish for some other duties, than by the indulgence of sloth or formality. We are oftener thrown out of the spirit of prayer, by giving way to wrong tempers, than by growing weary of regular habits. Fits of ill-humour, whether fiery or sulky, keep us out of the closet whilst they last, and make us afraid to enter it even when they are over. Hence the necessity of attaching almost as much importance to "a meek and quiet spirit," as to a devotional spirit. The former, as well as the latter, is an "ornament of great price in the sight of God;" and ought, therefore, to be equally lovely in our estimation. But, how few see so much moral beauty in self-control, or in a meek spirit, as in a devotional spirit! And yet, we all know well, that devotion is neither heavenly nor pleasing when we are angry or peevish. Were it, therefore, only for the sake of serenity and holy freedom in the closet, we ought to study the beauty of a holy temper so closely, that we could no more leave our humours, than our habits, to accident;

and no more risk the consequences of an unruly or hasty spirit, than of a defiled conscience. Indeed, for every purpose, whether practical or devotional, we ought to regard good temper as being as truly a mark of grace, as good habits, or gracious feelings. It is, in all its forms, "the fruit of the Spirit." Accordingly, "long-suffering, gentleness, and meekness," are classed with "love, joy, peace, and faith," in the scriptural enumeration of the special fruits of the Holy Spirit. And, what is equally to the point, their opposites, "wrath, strife, and variance," in common with heresy, are classed with the worst works of the flesh. Gal. v. 19, 23. Were this duly remembered, we should feel, in ruling our tongue and temper well, that we were as directly proving our faith in Christ, and evincing our participation of the Holy Spirit, as when we mounted on eagles' wings in devotion, or melted in love and penitence at the Sacrament. Yes; and we should both soar and sing oftener, if we habitually tried to possess our souls in patience and equanimity.

But even this is not the duty, which has "no comeliness" that commends it to our taste. The worst tempered do not admire passion even in themselves, however they may justify or palliate it at times. They often excuse it, but they never praise it, nor pretend that it makes them happy. Perhaps no Christians see so clearly, in one sense, the deformity of ill temper, as those who are, themselves, very irritable. They smart and suffer so much from giving way to it frequently, that they know well all its sad effects, however they may forget its sinfulness, or try to soften its guilt, in their own case. Neither are they insensible to the beauty of a meek and quiet spirit in others. They even wish they were like them; and, if wishing could make them so, they would be very glad! Of course, it never will: for in speaking thus, they are wishing for what no one has or can get in this world,—a spirit that should need neither ruling nor watching over. Grace to rule and watch over their own rebellious spirit, they might obtain by turning their

idle wishes into honest prayers: but even prayer itself, however fervent, will not bring down from heaven into any bosom, a spirit which nothing could ruffle, or which would require no looking after. There is no such temper in the universe, except in heaven. Let us not, therefore, amuse ourselves by dreaming about a lovely fiction, nor deceive ourselves by imagining that those who have an "excellent spirit," are so *gifted* with it, as to need no self-government nor pains-taking, in order to excel. Those who excel us most in temper, will all be found to exceed us equally in watchfulness.

I do not forget, whilst writing thus, that many are good-humoured, and even sweet-tempered, who yet have no grace whatever, nor any concern about it. In such cases, therefore, I readily allow, and solemnly affirm, that the sweetness of their disposition proves nothing but the healthiness of their nervous system, or the harmony of their physical powers, or the absence of provocation. In such females, therefore, habitual gentleness and suavity do

not amount even to moral principle, and are in no sense the fruits of the Spirit. The utmost and the best which can be said of this happy temperament, is, that it is an invaluable gift of Providence, very favourable to all the duties of life and godliness, and very useful to society. It ought, therefore, to be highly prized by all who possess it: for it is unquestionably given by Providence, as a motive to seek grace; and thus it involves weighty responsibilities, and leaves its possessors without excuse, if they neglect the great salvation.

Much more responsible and inexcusable, however, are we who have found some grace, and hope for still more, if we neglect our temper, or leave it to accident. For if nature, when unusually gentle, bind to improvement, how much grace confirms that obligation! If they sin who spoil a fine natural disposition by exposing it unnecessarily to temptation, how guilty are we when we allow grace to be defeated by nature, just because we did not try to rule our spirit at the time!

It will not do to set off against this neglect, the attention we pay to the great salvation itself, and to some of the spiritual duties which love to Christ involves. Indeed, the more attention we pay to them, the more inexcusable we are when we give way to a wrong spirit. Besides, we do not attend to them, whilst the fit of ill humour lasts. That which clouds our brow or convulses our frame, hides both Divine and eternal things from our sight, for the time; and renders it difficult, even afterwards, to renew clear and calm views of them again. Thus, what is really spiritual about us, is any thing but a set-off against what is natural. "The image of the heavenly," instead of excusing or palliating "the image of the earthy," only aggravates its inconsistency, whenever that inconsistency is allowed, or not singled out for crucifixion.

Nothing is farther from the real design of these hints, than to set an amiable spirit *above* a devotional spirit. My object is, to show clearly how they help each other, and how

much they depend on each other; that thus we may be equally careful to cultivate both. They are emphatically, the wings on which the soul rises to heaven; and if either wing is allowed to drop often, the other will not bear the soul far nor frequently within the veil. Hence the necessity of making Christian temper a matter of deliberate study. And I mean by studying it, not merely trying to rule your spirit better than you have done, nor even being more upon your guard than formerly; but also contemplating its own native loveliness, and its "great price" in the sight of God and man, as an "ornament" of female character. It must be loved, in order to be habitually attempted. But loved it will not be, until its own loveliness is seen and felt. We must be charmed by the beauty of this feature of the Divine Image, as well as charge ourselves by its authority or its necessity, if we would really abound in it.

This is equally true in regard to a forbearing and forgiving spirit. The duty of long-suffering under injury, and the still harder duty of both

forgiving and forgetting the injury, may stand very clearly before the mind, and even have much weight upon the conscience. We may neither despise nor dispute our obligation, to bury in oblivion whatever we have suffered from the hand or tongue of others: and yet, all our heart may rise and writhe against the duty of telling, or showing, the offenders, that we do forgive and forget. Indeed, we are inclined to think it quite enough, if God knows that we are trying to do it in his sight. Nothing, perhaps, is more mortifying than the idea of making known to the offender, face to face, that we have got over the offence: except, indeed, the idea of confessing our own faults to those whom we have offended. Both duties are sadly against the grain of human nature, even where grace has no small influence upon the heart. Accordingly, neither duty is, in general, well gone through, even by those who cannot be easy before God until their breaches with man are openly healed.

Here, again, the failure in this part of holi-

ness, arises from not studying the beauty of a right spirit. We look at both confessing and forgiving, too much in the lights of this world, or through the eyes of others; and thus come to deem that mean-spirited or very weak, which God reckons signally noble and peculiarly lovely. Whilst, therefore, a deeper sense of positive and imperative obligation to confess and forgive, is of immense importance; still, that alone, will not lead to much of either until both are admired for their beauty, as well as admitted because of their authority. We must learn to love these duties because they are lovely in the sight of God; and for the sake of the good they create and the mischief they prevent, as well as for the sake of the laws which enforce them: for, otherwise, we shall shrink from them entirely, or perform them grudgingly.

I have now said quite enough to convince you, that more than regard to the law of holiness, or than the dread of the penal sanctions which enforce it, is necessary, in order to a cheerful and impartial following of holiness.

We must be drawn by its silken cords, as well as driven by its knotted whip: for, otherwise, we shall not go far enough, to make our calling and election sure; nor readily enough to prove that "the love of Christ constraineth us."

The grand question here, however, is, how are such winning views of the beauty of Holiness to be acquired, without a degree of study greater than we have time for, and deeper than our talents can reach? Now, happily, the Ethics of Holiness are both few and simple. Its chief reasons are founded upon what God is, upon what Christ has done for us, and upon what is obviously wanted as preparation for the enjoyments and engagements of Heaven.

Did you ever observe how the first of these reasons (which is the most profound) is brought before us in the Scriptures? "As He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." 1 Pet. i. 15. Thus *calling* Grace introduces *commanding*

Holiness. God appeals to what he has done for us, before telling us all we must be. What is "written to us on the subject of holiness, is founded upon what is "wrought" in us by the Holy Spirit. God reminds us that he has called us by his grace, when he invites us to contemplate and copy his holiness. Thus He interests our hearts, that he may exercise our understanding, and sway our conscience, by the glories of his own character. Truly God is love, in the very manner in which he gives law to his children!

Now we fondly hope that what we have felt of the power and sweetness of the Gospel, is, the gracious "calling" of God. We may be somewhat afraid to say that it is, positively, that effectual calling of God, which is, "without repentance" on his part: but we are very anxious that it may prove to be so, and quite sure that it has been effectual for some good purposes upon both our hearts and habits already. We may not see so clearly the precise time of our call, as to be able, like Paul,

to point to the very moment of our conversion, saying, "When it pleased God to call me by his grace:" but we do remember the time, when we disliked godliness, and felt no need of grace. We are very glad that

"These times are past!"

and would not for worlds they should return!

Well; the holiness of God did not prevent Him from calling us by his Spirit, even whilst we were "dead in trespasses and sins." In fact, it was because He is glorious in holiness, that the love wherewith he loved us when he quickened us, was so "rich in mercy:" for had he not loved Holiness infinitely, he would never have taken one step, nor made one stoop, to make us holy. We need not be afraid, therefore, to study how holy the God who called us, is. Had he been less holy, he would not have called us nor any one. Well, therefore, may the harp of Judah be listened to and obeyed, when it invites us to "give

thanks at the remembrance of His holiness:" for were not God infinitely and immutably holy, there would be no grace to give thanks for.

I mention this particularly, because it is too common to speak and think only of the love or the mercy of God, when gratitude for grace is claimed from us. All grace, however, is given for holy purposes; and, therefore, it ought to lead out our thoughts to the Divine Holiness which is the moral reason of this, as well as to the Divine Love which is the original fountain of grace. The character, as well as the heart, of God, must be kept in view. We have no more right to look at the latter, apart from the former, for comfort, than the twelve tribes of Israel had to look only upon the breastplate of Aaron for their names, when he interceded before the Lord. Their names were also upon the *beryl-stones*, on his shoulders. Thus they were placed upon the seat of authority, as well as upon the seat of sympathy; and borne where government rested, as well as where grace reigned. It is in allusion to this, that it is said

of Christ, "The government shall be upon his shoulders."

There is, therefore, something wrong in our views, if we are afraid to think of the holiness of God: and if we dislike to think of it, there is much wrong in our hearts. Our dislike will not move, however, until our dread is removed. So long as the holiness of God presents any thing to terrify us; or is regarded as an attribute which is against us; or as an awful perfection which would turn from us with abhorrence, were it not prevented by Love and Mercy; so long we shall not love it. We cannot love the Holiness of God, whilst we reckon it our enemy, or regard it as no farther our friend, than just as far as the intercession of Christ keeps it from breaking out upon us in fury.

This, alas! is, however, the ordinary view of it. In this light, the generality contemplate it: and therefore dislike the subject. It seems to them to have no "beauty" that they should desire it. Do you feel at all in this way? Does the holiness of God appear to you an attribute

flashing rather with devouring fire, than with soft splendour? Do you look to it only from necessity; and never from choice, except when you feel your need of a strong check upon yourself? Were you never so charmed by the beauty of Jehovah's holiness, as to "give thanks at the remembrance" of it? Can you hardly imagine how you could ever so get over your instinctive dread of it, as to delight in thinking of it, or to be capable of contemplating it with composure? Does it seem to you impossible to be as much charmed with the holiness of God, as you have been with his love and mercy?

I multiply these questions, and magnify their importance, just to throw your thoughts fully off from vulgar opinion, and fairly forth upon the revealed character of God in Christ. "In the face of Jesus," the brightness of the glory of the Divine holiness, shines as mildly as the softest radiance of any perfection you admire.

In order to be convinced of this, you have only to ask yourself the single question—

"Were God *unholy*, what security would remain for the continuance of any of his lovely perfections?" Do you not see at a glance, that His holiness preserves them all? It is the *vital* principle of the Divine character. Because it lives—Love, mercy, grace, truth, and wisdom "live also."

But I have gone so fully into this subject, in my little work on "MANLY PIETY," that I must leave you to follow out the hint for yourself; for, in fact, I have exhausted all my definite ideas already.

No. VIII.

CHRISTIANS HOLY TEMPLES.

"REMEMBER your rank, my Lord, and respect it," said a venerable friend of mine, (apart) to a young nobleman, who had so far forgotten all that he owed to his "order," as to descend to vulgar manners and language in the Mail. The deserved reproof had the desired effect: the young man resumed all the proverbial urbanity and politeness of his high station.

This is one of the beneficial influences of hereditary and official rank: it imposes propriety on power. It does not always prevent vice; but it preserves decorum, and enforces the semblance of virtue, in the intercourse of society. When nobility, however, is enshrined with noble recollections of patriotic ancestry

which hallow it more than age, or wealth, or heraldry, more is expected from it than decorum or courtesy. The descendants of the champions and martyrs of both civil and religious Liberty, are expected to breathe the spirit, as well as wear the mantle, of the patriots who immortalized their name. A Russell, Sidney, or Hampden, without public spirit; or a Wickliffe, Ridley, Cranmer, Baxter, or Owen, without Protestant spirit, would be an anomaly, equally unnatural and repulsive to the public mind: for whilst "England expects every man to do his duty," to her sacred liberties, she *calculates* upon sacrifices, as well as duty, from the lineal representatives of "the mighty dead," who claimed with their voice, or sealed with their blood, the charter of her independence. Such associations are not, however, the only sources of honourable and inspiring feeling, which tells well upon the interests of society at large. Nothing has softened or purified the intercourse of social life, more than the *self-respect* of females. By

respecting themselves, for the sake of their sex, they have won respect and homage. Their moral influence has kept pace with their moral tastes and intellectual character, and made itself felt like the fragrance, in all directions; and felt most when, like fragrance-flowers, they seem unconscious of their own sweetness. They have thus created "a law unto themselves," which promulgates itself without a trumpet, and explains itself without words, and prolongs its own authority by their silence. A look defines it even to the dull; and a blush defends it like lightning, from the designing. A woman has only to respect herself as a woman, in order to be respected.

You feel, accordingly, that you owe much to your sex, on its own account. You see at a glance, both what is worthy and what is unworthy of it. You do not, and cannot, forget what is expected from you on the single ground of your sex. You are not sorry that so much is expected. You are even gratified and glad, that "whatsoever things are pure,

whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," are calculated upon, as almost matters of course in your character. You can hardly regret that, when woman falls, she

"Falls like Lucifer, to rise no more,"

in this world. The feeling in the public mind, that women, like Angels, must stand or fall for ever, is, indeed, a high one; but it is highly honourable to you, and unspeakably beneficial to society. It may expect and exact too much from you: but it enables you to do more and better, and both more easily, than if the standard of female excellence were lower.

Why not, then, respect your piety as much as your sex? If there be any thing inspiring and responsible in the consideration,—"I am a woman, and one of Britain's daughters;" how much more in the consideration,—"I am a Christian, and one of the daughters of the Lord God Almighty!" The latter relationship is, I am fully aware, not so easily realized or

claimed as the former; the former is your birth-right, which nothing but crime can forfeit. The latter is an adoption, which no virtue can merit. It is not, however, on that account less obtainable, nor less free, nor less ascertainable: for "to as many as receive Him—even to them that believe on His name," Christ gives "power," (that is, warrant and welcome,) to regard themselves as the children of God. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God," they are the children of God.

These are neither equivocal nor discouraging tests of adoption. They prove *your* adoption into the redeemed family of God, if you honestly welcome Christ as your only hope of salvation, and honestly desire to be led by the Spirit into all truth and duty. And, do you not? If you really did not, why are you so deeply interested in this subject? Why, else, are you so anxious to be a child of God? How came the question of your adoption to lay such hold upon your mind and heart! "Who opened thine eyes" to see the need and nature

of "being born again," in order to becoming one of God's spiritual family? This persuasion cometh not from instinct, age, example, or education. It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. He has "quickened," "illuminated," and "led," wherever the Spirit of adoption is thus prized, and prayed for, and longed after. The heart is *magnetized* by grace, that turns to this holy pole.

The question of your adoption is, however, one which ought not, and never can be well settled, by your own consciousness of certain feelings or desires on the subject. It is a practical, as much as an experimental question. It turns quite as much upon what you are trying to be and do, as upon what you wish to feel and enjoy. If, therefore, in addition to your solicitude to be a child of God, you are trying to copy the likeness, and to cultivate the spirit, of His regenerated family, the question is settled: "ye are no more strangers or foreigners;" but members of the "household of God:" "ye were sometimes darkness; but ye

are now light in the Lord: walk as children of the light."

Amongst the many forms of Scriptural appeal to those who are thus solicitous to ascertain their adoption, the most frequent, if not the most forcible is, "What; know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you?" "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the Living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them," (the ungodly,) "and be ye separate, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty; and touch not the unclean thing." 2 Cor. vi. 16.

I wish to fix your attention upon this view of yourself as a Temple. It is a fascinating, as well as a solemn, view of your state and responsibility. It is a view more easily taken and retained than some others: for, although

drawn from the ancient Temple of Jerusalem, and thus associated with many sublime peculiarities, to which parallels would be difficult either to find or fancy, it is still a simple view of a Christian. For, after all that can be said or imagined of the Holy Temple, it was but a house made with hands, and of earthly materials; and thus less likely to be made "a habitation of God through the Spirit," than the human frame. Solomon felt this, even when the first temple was in all the fulness and freshness of its architectural glory. "Will God," said he, "in very deed dwell with *man* upon the earth? Behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain Thee!" How much less this House which I have built!" In this exclamation of Solomon, the inferiority of the temple to man, as well as to heaven, is both implied and expressed. Or, if Solomon did not intend to say this, "a greater than Solomon" has said it again and again. "Thus saith the high and lofty ONE that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the

high and holy place: with him also that is of an humble and contrite spirit." Isa. lvii. 15. "Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? But to this man will I look,—even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.

This settles the inferiority of all temples to both the human soul and body. They form a "living temple," and may be a "holy temple" in a higher sense than even the heaven of heavens itself.

Let us not be misled by words, nor bewildered with splendid appearances. Even your bodies are more "fearfully and wonderfully made," than the material heavens which form the actual temple and throne of Deity: and your spirits, both in their essence and immortality, are nobler than the fine ether which is the firmament of glory. We think too meanly of both our soul and body, when we

imagine that any thing material, in heaven or on earth, is equal to them. We cannot, indeed, think too meanly of their moral tastes and tendencies by nature. We may well say of the body, that it is vile as well as frail; and of the soul, that it is depraved as well as weak: but neither is worthless. Worthless! no, no; Emmanuel counted them more valuable than fallen angels: for he took not upon him the nature of angels. He made His own soul an offering for our souls, and he will make our bodies "like unto His own glorious body." The Temple, even when filled with the glory of God, was but an emblem of what every man and woman should be, and of what any one may be;—"an habitation of God through the Spirit." It was to exemplify and secure this, that Christ became at once the temple, the priest, and the sacrifice of God. In our nature, He showed what human nature should be, and might be. As sustained by Him, Humanity was (and he called it so) a Temple, in which dwelt "all

the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Such a Temple was the Saviour; and such temples, in their measure, may we be; "filled with all the (communicable) fulness of God."

It is not to our credit, if we deem this a sublime speculation, rather than a sober reality. Paul did not view it in this light, either for himself or others. He bowed his knees in frequent and fervent prayer for the Ephesians, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God, by being enabled to comprehend, with all saints, the wonders of the love of Christ. Eph. iii. 14, 21. What "holy temples unto the Lord," the Apostle desired and expected Believers to become! "Christ," says he, "may dwell in your hearts by faith." "Christ is in you, the hope of glory." "Know ye not yourselves, how that Christ is in you?"

It will not do to overlook this often repeated and pressed consideration. It occurs too frequently and emphatically to be trifled with, or evaded. "Christ is in you," says Paul, "except ye be reprobates." This gives

awful solemnity to the question, "Am I a living Temple, and trying to be a holy Temple, unto the Lord?" For, although the word "reprobate" has none of the meaning of the word "Reprobation," as that term was used in the olden times of the Calvinistic controversy, still it means so much that is awful and ominous, that we do well to lay deeply to heart Paul's admonition: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves: know ye not yourselves, how that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates," or without any real marks of grace?

Christ himself throws us as fully upon the same question, by his own representations of the TEMPLESHIP of his disciples. "I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be one in us," is the grand point in which his prayers for their sanctification meet and terminate. John xvii. 23. "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our *abode* with him." John xiv. 23. "The world know-

eth not the Spirit of Truth, because it seeth him not; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John xiv. 17.

When such passages are thus multiplied, they do not (be it recollected) mean more as a whole, than is meant by any one of them. The design of so many, is not to convey such an idea of the work or witness of the Holy Spirit, as must intimidate or perplex us. No, indeed: their design is just the very opposite. We, indeed, are very ready when such an array of texts is before us, to take alarm; or to conclude from them, that nothing we have experienced, and nothing we are ever likely to possess, can amount to "the first fruits of the Spirit" even. Multiplied statements on this subject, seem to magnify it beyond all ordinary piety. This is, however, quite a mistake. The very fear, suspense, and solicitude, which you now feel, lest this view of piety should disprove your piety, prove that you are not a stranger to the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Your heart would neither feel the worth, nor fear the want of His gracious

influences, if it had never experienced any of them. We both have the Spirit, and are in some measure "after the Spirit," if we seriously "mind the things of the Spirit." We are the temples of the Holy Ghost, if we honestly desire and try to be holy temples unto the Lord.

Is this your aim? If so, there is nothing in all the hosts of texts which you have just reviewed, to discourage you. The grand object of each and all of them, is to penetrate your whole spirit with the living conviction, that you are one of God's consecrated temples; and thus must take care, that you neither "defile" nor discredit the temple of God. Now, you do take some care, that you may not disgrace the profession you make; that you may not bring any reproach upon religion; that your life may not give the lie to your creed or your hopes. Well; why not connect all this holy fear, and care, and watchfulness, with the consideration that you are "the temple of God?" You connect them (and very properly) with your name,

and your place in the Church of God; with your fond hope that you have found, or shall find, mercy of the Lord; with your good name in your family, and among your friends. All this is as it should be. I would not detach your sense of responsibility, nor your regard to consistency, from any one of these checks and charms upon character. It would, however, strengthen and prolong the influence of them all, to recognise as fully, and realize as constantly, your templeship, as a Christian. That means no more than is meant by your profession, your obligations, or your responsibility: but it defines them clearly, and commends as well as enforces them powerfully. You ought, therefore, to be willing, yea, thankful and glad, to avail yourself of any new consideration that adds to the power of the old motives which regulate your conduct; especially, when, as in this instance, the *new* motive is as scriptural as the old ones.

But, why do I call it new? The idea of Templeship, is as old, and as often repeated in

Scripture, as the idea of discipleship, sonship, or citizenship. You have just seen that the New Testament is full of it. It does not, however, occur often in religious conversation now. It does not seem to have the same place or power in the mind of Christians, that the other ideas possess. But, why should it not be as familiar and influential as any of them? It is not inferior to them in beauty or point; and not so superior to them in sublimity, as to be difficult to comprehend, remember, or apply. "I am a living temple of God, and ought to be a holy temple," is as soon and as easily said, as, "I am a professor of religion, and ought to be consistent."

But I must not argue with you, as if it were optional to you, to admit or decline the use of this holy consideration. You are not at liberty to overlook it for another day, even if you have done pretty well without thinking of it hitherto. It is, most likely, the very motive which you now want, in order to keep up the influence of your old motives, in following holiness. For,

have they all their original power over you? Does your sense of responsibility as a convert, as a disciple, as a possessor of grace, carry you all the length it did, when you first took "the vows of God" upon you? If not—you may backslide until you break down altogether on the narrow way, unless you get hold, at this critical nick of time, upon the rallying and inspiring consideration of your templeship.

I know that the word itself is new: but you know that the idea is as old as your Bible. I have not coined the word for the sake of novelty, or of singularity; but in order to arrest attention to "the mind of Christ," as that is expressed in the "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." I tell you again, therefore, that it is neither wise nor safe to exclude this scriptural view of your obligation to be holy, or to try to do without it any longer. If you are a real Christian, Christianity considers and calls you, the temple of God, of Christ, and of the Spirit; and remonstrates with you, as well as commands you, to consider yourself in this light. And

mark; you cannot point to, nor conceive of, any appeal to your principles, or hopes, or responsibilities, as a Christian woman, so striking in its form and stirring in its spirit as this one. Look at it again. "What! know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" "Know ye not that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

THE END.

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